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ABSTRACT

Diverse aspects of rural problems and the social organization of Mexican labor are explcred in this summary of Mexican rural history. Achnowledging Mexico's rich, unexhausted, and unexplored natural resources, Mexico is described as a poverty-stricken, hungry nation, with high degrees of malnutrition, deprivation, and illiteracy heavily concentrated in rural areas. Present forms of land tenure (which result from social and technological struggles and developments of the past four decades) are explained. Influence of the government on rural evclution and resultant social attitudes is detailed. Emphasizing the precarious condition of approximately 30 million rural "campesinos" (the peasant class), the narrative discusses the developing conflict between capitalistic expansion initiated by the Mexican government and the desires of the campesinos for their economic liberty. Advantages and disadvantages are weighed for potential options afforded the two groups in settling this dilemma of land ownership and development. It is ncted that some resolution of this conflict is deemed necessary if Mexico is tc provide solutions to present rural problems. (JD)

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THE STRUGGLE OF RURAL MEXICO

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1980

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"Don't beg for anything. Demand what's rightfully ours. What he should have given me but never did... Make him pay dearly, my son, for having forgotten us.

The road climbed up and sloped down: it climbs up or slopes down according to whether you are arriving or leaving. When you leave, it climbs up; when you arrive, it slopes down."

Juan Rulfo, PEDRO PARAMO

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INTRODUCTION

The homeland of the Mexican people is rich, but hostile.

Vast resources lie in the subsoil. Frequently these have been exploited with more voracity than judgement but they still remain, even today, unexhausted and unexplored. A much larger population than the present one could find sustenance and room for development under such a variety of soils and climates. However Mexico has been, and still is, a poverty-striken, hungry nation.

Nature, generous in the distribution of its wealth throughout this land, has shown herself unwilling to relinquish it. Reaching the wealth of the land has challenged the strength and imagination of its inhabitants. A difficult orography obstructs communication and integration of the country, emphasizing all the more the imbalance of natural conditions. Of Mexico's few rivers, some tend to overflow their banks, and others are full only from time to time. Deserts and arid or semiarid areas occupy two thirds of the land. An erratic climate characterizes most of the arable land. Thus, the Mexican people have had to surmount great difficulties in order to conquer their natural wealth and transform it into something capable of satisfying their needs. The very magnitude of such wealth in the soil and subsoil has awoken the greed of Mexicans or foreigners who have disputed the right of the people to use it for their own benefit.

The history of rural Mexico is one of constant violence. It has been described as an eternal battle to overcome a hostile environment by adapting it to the needs of its inhabitants. And it has become an intense and permanent battle between those making this effort and those who dominate them.

Many Indian societies of prehispanic Mexico had reached the stage which analysts of human evolution call "high culture". As a result of the agricultural surplus already being produced, they developed

more advanced political structures and many different crafts.

In this type of society, as is well known, man is not thought of as an island. Man is family, clan, tribe. The idea of loneliness as presently conceived of and felt in the Western World, would perhaps have been abhorrent and strange to the Aztecs, the most developed state of prehispanic Mexico.

Agriculture was virtually the only basis for development in these societies. The Aztecs were basically *campesino*-soldiers until their migration stopped in 1325. During the following two centuries they became citizen soldiers capable of exerting an aggressive despotism toward other tribes and even towards themselves. But they never ceased to be *campesinos*: their lives were inescapably related to agriculture.

At the beginning of the XVI century, during the first two decades of the Spanish Conquest, the conquerors were determined to destroy the close-knit social community of the Indians. Although this resulted in their losing some of their customs and traditions it also meant that they acquired a common objective: to fight for the survival of their own communities. The Spaniards, concerned only with their own immediate interests or the demands of colonial government, took not only the agricultural surplus and available wealth, but they also took over the forces of production, without providing for their reproduction.

Historical research has convincingly shown the predatory nature of colonization. Estimates of the size of the Indian population at the time of the Spanish Conquest vary between 7 and 25 million. But whatever the figure, it dwindled to little more than one million over the following century. Hunger and plague partly explain this decrease, but the true cause was the systematic genocide of entire tribes as well as the irrational and inhumane exploitation and subjugation of the Indian population. Evidence of this is provided by the different measures of self-destruction undertaken by the Indian society in order to avoid this kind of aggression —measures such as birth control, systematic abortion, infanticide, and mass suicide.

The growing shortage of labour available to the Spaniards, who were already suffering from a scarcity of supplies, together with more and more persistant resistance from the Indian communities, forced the colonial administration to slacken its rule. Thus the structure of this period was shaped over a long period, defined by the coexistence of two apparently separate protagonists. On the one side were the Indian communities which had managed to maintain their own social and productive organization while bound at the same time to the Spanish Crown through tribute exacted from them (initially through Aztec noblemen). On the other side, were the Spaniards, and later *criollos* and occasionally *mestizos*, who worked directly with the productive units, most of which were in the form of *haciendas*. These two systems had a common denominator: the agricultural worker.

The communities were self-sufficient and any surplus was paid as tribute. The provision of labour was a part of this tribute and together with labourers from other places formed the basis of the maintenance and development of Spanish exploitation. The actual conditions of the rural workers varied from one extreme, that of "slave", to the other of wage earner, with different kinds of serfdom in between. This wide range reflected the complex situation of a period in which Mexican society was gradually integrated into the world market, then in the process of formation. However, the conflictive dialectics between community and *hacienda* which characterized this development, lasted beyond the colonial period, and was permanently associated with the omnipresence of the Church.

Again unconfirmed figures estimate that half the population of five million, at the beginning of the XIX century, was Indian. A quarter of this was made up of *castas* —the result of the mixing of different ethnic groups. There were about one million *criollos*, 70,000 white Europeans, and some 6,000 African negroes.

In 1810, the year of Independence, the Indian communities in spite of foreign domination had managed to safeguard, for their own exploitation, about 18 million hectares. Many of the workers on some 10,000 *ranchos* covering more than 70 million hectares maintained community organization among themselves. Approximately 100 million hectares were declared wasteland. The *peon* of the *hacienda* who suffered the disadvantages of both "slave" and wage earner, was still struggling for survival and development within the social structure of his own community, which itself was in constant conflict.

In the fifty years following Independence, the productive structure collapsed and economic growth came to a halt. Commercial agriculture, controlled by Spaniards and *criollos*, entered a recession. For the recently emerging capitalists, the land was a source of rent or mortgage but rarely was investment for production made. Their business activities were centered on mining, commerce, speculation and on investment in non-productive real estate, and generally took the form of commercial capital. During this period, the rural communities achieved a certain amount of autonomy, though there was neither stability nor development. There was no political power capable of controlling them effectively, although they constantly had to face spoilation and expropriation. Many uprisings marked the constant struggle of these communities against the *hacienda* which remained, throughout the century, as the principal form of rural productive organization. However, these uprisings merely served, and then not always, to ensure the production necessary for their own needs and their survival as social organizations.

From 1867 to 1876, during the period of the Restauration of the Republic, the conditions for a democratic-liberal organization of the Mexican people were established. Confiscation of the Catholic Church's immense wealth, and the disregarding of the system of

collective property of Indian communities were the results of a decision to open the way for small and medium sized agricultural holdings, a pattern modelled on that in use at the time in North America. (In 1862, the farmer paid a dollar per acre... when he had to pay for it.) The sudden intrusion on *campesino* lands of individuals and enterprises taking over productive development, along the lines of the North American model, caused many revolts which were severely repressed.

Under Porfirio Díaz's dictatorship, access to the land was opened up for new farmers at the expense of the *campesinos*. *Ejidos* and communities continued to be dismantled, since they could be legally expropriated by a simple administrative procedure. In order to take over uncultivated areas, new laws were promulgated which gave birth to what were called *Compañías deslindadoras* ('boundary setting companies'). One of their tasks was to encourage the immigration of foreigners. From 1877 to 1920, these companies promoted the distribution of more than 40,000 title deeds, accounting for almost 40 million acres of land. Since the *hacendados* were able to participate in the definition of boundaries, those most affected were the communities and small holdings whose land was taken over together with uncultivated areas by these companies. In only two decades (1876 - 1894), one fifth of Mexican land fell into the hands of fifty owners and the number of *haciendas* was tripled.

By 1910, 12 million, out of a total population of 15 million, worked in agriculture. Some 8,000 haciendas belonging to an even smaller number of owners, covered 113 million hectares. These haciendas employed about 4,500 administraters; 3,000 tenants and 3 million *peones acasillados* and *peones aparceros*. There were 50 thousand *rancheros* with 10 million hectares and 110,000 small holdings with 1.4 million hectares. Some 150,000 Indian land holders occupied about 6 million hectares (12 million less than in 1810); these, together with their families, formed a population of approximately one million (50% of the Nation's total Indian population). Half of the population dwelt in 57,000 villages which were controlled by the *haciendas* and *ranchos*. The other half lived in 13,000 free villages and was subjected to many varied forms of exploitation such as seasonal work as *peones* in the *haciendas*. Thus, less than 1% of the population owned 90% of the land and more than 90% of the rural population was barred access to it.

In 1910, the impoverished *campesinos*, who a century before had made independence possible hoping that this would liberate them, again looked for freedom resulting in the generalized popular insurrection which toppled the dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz. They were the main protagonists in a vast social movement which seemed to have arisen initially without them but in which the *campesino* armies were soon to become a dominant force. Their military hegemony, however, was not capable of becoming a political power and withered away.

Between one and two million people died between 1910 and 1920; i.e.

PREFACE

Dr. Rodolfo Stavenhagen, President of the Local Arrangements Committee for the V World Congress on Rural Sociology, conceived the idea of preparing a book on rural Mexico as part of the preliminary activities for this event, due to take place in Mexico City from the 7th to the 12th of August, 1980. For the first time, the Congress was to be held in a Third World country, and one moreover, with a long agrarian history. The Congress was so planned as to allow for field trips to different parts of rural Mexico where diverse aspects of rural problems and manners of social organization of labour could be observed. It was thus deemed advantageous for the participants, especially those coming from other countries, to have a summary available of the rural history of this country, as well as of its present situation.

Towards the middle of 1979, Dr. Stavenhagen invited me to coordinate this project. I accepted with a great deal of enthusiasm but not enough forethought. Soon, however, the difficulties of the task became apparent. A comprehensive, objective synthesis of rural Mexico based on rigorous studies can only be made if the necessary information is available, but in Mexico it is glaringly absent. For many reasons, discussion of this subject is always highly charged with ideologies which limits the possibility of a deep, scientific study of our own reality.

Getting information on rural areas of Mexico often involves some kind of metaphysical search; somewhat like looking for a non-existent black cat in a dark room. In spite of recent efforts and publications produced by the Secretaría de Programación y Presupuesto, it is important to recognize the fact that information on the rural situation in Mexico is very inadequate. In fact, there is not one group of statistical data that can be fully relied on. At every step, sources contradict each other. Frequent changes in methodology and obvious errors make comparisons in time impossible. At the moment, the situation is even more serious. The last census was

taken ten years ago and cannot in general be compared to previous ones, since for electoral reasons it was taken at a different period in the agricultural year from the others. Obviously, then, information obtained on rural production units and workers was distorted. Furthermore, the last direct research project, with back-up by surveys, etc., was also carried out more than ten years ago and based on the census of 1960. This has been used up to now as the basis for many studies of rural conditions, when evidently it cannot pretend to give a true picture of rural Mexico today, particularly in view of the profound changes that have taken place over the last decade.

In order to deal with these problems, a method was required which would reduce the weight of quantitative analysis. In addition to relying on more dependable statistics, an attempt was made to supply data on the present through averages for the last decade. Although averaging erroneous figures does not eliminate errors, we felt that in this way it would be possible to focus on structural and global aspects which would more likely correspond to reality. Greater weight was given to historical data Although here too the picture was rather discouraging, some important work and sufficiently proven facts afford the researcher a certain amount of security with which to work. For the sake of brevity, sources and methods used have not been given for all figures quoted. Some of this information will be found in the Statistical Appendix.

I have attempted to be brief, in view of the aims of the book, and any repetitions must seem uncomfortable. They have been retained, however, because the book was constructed in what might be called "spiral form" —that is, gradually going deeper into the main points. I hope in this way to facilitate comprehension, rather than provoke tedium.

In order to get the task under way, a group of research workers, who dedicated a large part of their time to the project was formed. For several months, we had weekly analysis and discussion meetings by means of which we were able to clarify our ideas and solve some of the specific problems involved in the elaboration of the book. Some researchers wrote the first draft of some chapters: Part One, Chapter I was done by Alejandro Betancourt; Andrés Lambert did the following three; Oscar Colman prepared the first two chapters, Rosa Miriam Ribeiro the third, and David Barkin the fourth of Part Two. Alejandro Betancourt gave decisive directions for gathering and processing the information; Javier Rodríguez participated in completing the work, and Victor Palacio in revising it.

I was responsible for the general coordination of the project, the complete elaboration of some chapters and for integrating and editing of the final draft of the text. However, I wish to emphasize that the elaboration of the book was made possible through the constant sharing and participation during our weekly meetings. At the same time I accept responsibility for the short-comings, limita-

tions and inadequacies of my own work. I cherish the hope that this book will encourage other researchers to carry out studies —more profound, more extensive and more rigorous than this— on conditions in rural Mexico. Working on the present one has made me more aware than ever before of how serious is our lack of material on the subject.

Mexico City, April, 1980.

Gustavo Esteva
Vice-President of the
Mexican Organizing Committee for the
V World Congress on Rural Sociology

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approximately 10% of the population (apparently no other modern revolution, or any other one for that matter, has had such a high death rate). The 1910 population and production growth rates were not regained until 1920. Violence increased regional and sectorial differences. The number of agricultural workers increased but their production and income decreased. The petroleum and mineral production in the hands of North American and British interests, showed such rapid and sometimes spectacular increases that by 1920 these figured among the principal exports. Industry and business and urban centres in general came through it all relatively strengthened. Per capita agricultural production increased in the north of the country —likewise in the northeast— where the largest *hacienda* under the Porfirian dictatorship had been. However, in the rest of the country it decreased, especially in the central states, precisely where the *campesino* insurrection had been most intense and persistant. Although many *campesino* communities recovered their land, particularly in the State of Morelos, the global concentration of agricultural property remained virtually unchanged.

The historical project of modern Mexico, embodied in the Constitution of 1917, did include some of the main historical *campesino* demands, but they have been fighting since then to have them satisfied in full. The rural history of Mexico in this century is largely the confrontation between these historically based claims and private commercial agriculture, which in turn, is in permanent conflict with the *campesinos* over control of productive resources. Up until the '30s, the model of the Porfirian *haciendas* persisted with changes of ownership and organization but with no structural changes. From 1934 to 1940, under the Lázaro Cárdenas administration, more than 20 million hectares were redistributed among the *campesinos* —almost twice as many as during the previous 20 years. Agricultural production increased at a rate of 5% per year and the *campesino ejidos*, occupying by 1940 almost half the land available for cultivation, went through a period of great innovation and unexpected strength. In this decade, private commercial agriculture suffered advances and reversals as a result of both the varying *campesino* strength as well as of the changes taking place in national and international policies. After World War II, an agricultural transformation, concentrated in specific areas, took place. This gave private commercial agriculture a clear hegemony, fitting smoothly into the global process of the internationalization of capital characteristic of the last decades of world evolution, while the economy of the *campesino* declined. After a few years, more than half the value of production and around 70% of agricultural and cattle raising activities was concentrated in one tenth of the agricultural and cattle raising land. The rural population represented just over a third of the total population (as against 65% in 1940) and was declared the poorest sector of Mexican society.

After 1965, the rural crisis inherent to this process became more evident. In the '70s, 25 million tons of grain had to be imported. In order to satisfy the demands of 1980, a quarter of basic goods

required will have to be imported. And in spite of this, over half the population suffers serious malnutrition. As the crisis increases, so has *campesino* mobilization, with the consequent growth of unrest in rural areas and continual clashes between antagonistic groups fighting for control of the resources of production. Not a day passes without leaving some casualties from these struggles.

This book will attempt to analyze the origin, content and the possible outcome of this persistent history of extreme violence.

PART ONE
THE BATTLEFIELD

This section deals with the context and background of the battle for rural Mexico.

First, some international comparisons are necessary in order to situate the country within a world context and to highlight some of the inequalities present.

The first chapter on rural production and rural dwellers gives basic information on the rural context. It describes above all for whom the *campesinos* actually work, i.e. the final destination of their produce. Following this, information is given on what they do (the kind of crops they cultivate), and how they do it (what kind of resources they have available). The chapter concludes with a brief statistical account of their living conditions.

The next two chapters give some points of reference for understanding the battle for rural Mexico. The battlelines in the struggle for control of resources (the social conflict) and the struggle for transforming them (the technological struggle) have become inextricably interwoven in the real scheme of history. However, for the sake of description and analysis, these have to be examined separately. Thus, the second chapter highlights the changes since the Mexican Agrarian Reform which have lead to the present forms of land tenure in this country. The third chapter describes the so-called "Green Revolution" which has been associated with the technological development of the last four decades.

The fourth and last chapter describes government intervention in rural evolution. The governmental attitude, as an expression of the forces at play, provides a precise and necessary framework of the existing social dynamics in rural Mexico.

MEXICO: SOME INTERNATIONAL COMPARISONS

INDICATOR	In the World	Place in the Third World	In Latin America
Territorial Extension	14	8	3
Length of coast lines	5	2	1
Population	13	7	2
Production and Resources			
Gross National Product	17	4	3
Oil and Gas Reserves	6	5	1
Electricity	17	4	2
Mining (excluding oil)	21	4	2
Agriculture and cattle production	9	4	2
Fishing production	28	15	4
Industrial production			
Means of Communication			
Length of highways	18	4	3
Length of railway systems	14	3	3
Airports (passengers/km)	13	2	2
Circulating vehicles	14	3	3
Telephones	15	2	2
Radio receivers	8	2	2
Television receivers	13	1	1
Newspapers	7	4	2
Social Indexes			
Per capita produce	60	29	11
Population rate of growth	8	8	3
Life expectancy at birth	63	27	15
Physicians per inhabitant	61	25	11
Hospital beds per inhabitant	176	137	41
Mortality rate	50	45	21

CHAPTER ONE
RURAL PRODUCTION AND RURAL DWELLERS

PRODUCTION AND WHERE IT GOES

Mexico is among the leading food-producing countries. It is among the first ten in the world (9th). In 1980 its produce per capita was higher than the nutritional level generally considered as the minimum for subsistence levels: 2,750 calories and 80 grams of protein per person per day.

However, Mexico is not using this productive capacity to feed her own people. In the same year, 1980, more than a quarter of basic food requirements had to be imported. Even this rate of importing did not assure the recommended minimums of calories and proteins for half the population. Almost 90% of the rural population suffers from a severe deficit of calories and proteins; a quarter of the entire Mexican population subsists on from 25% to 40% below the recommended minimum levels. Some rural areas are on the verge of starvation.

This evident contradiction between food production and consumption is a result of the way in which productive resources are used and distributed.

— Mexico exports a significant volume of food, some of high nutritional value. In economic terms, the value of sales to other countries represents from 10% to 15% of total agricultural and cattle raising production.

— Food products for internal consumption are not evenly distributed. 3.5% of the population consumes more than 4,000 calories per person per day and another 16% between 3,000 and 4,000. At the other extreme, a fifth of the population consumes daily less than 2,000 calories per person and never eats meat, eggs or wheat bread. 40% of the population never drinks milk; 70% never eats fish.

Thus, about half the agricultural and cattle raising production of Mexico goes to foreign consumers or to a select minority of the population. The other half feeds the rest of the population and satisfies the industrial demand for raw materials.

Looked at from another point of view, agricultural and cattle raising production, apart from its function of supplying provisions in the way described above, generates foreign currency and finances urban development. In spite of the increasing need for importing food, the agricultural and cattle raising commercial balance remains favourable. Likewise, different economic mechanisms (commercial, financial and fiscal) facilitate the transfer of rurally produced resources to other agents and sectors of the economy.

Present day tendencies of agricultural and cattle raising production in Mexico illustrate the conflict between the revenue producing areas —aimed at export or high-income levels— and those areas whose production corresponds to the basic needs of the people. This conflict has been present throughout this country's history.

— Three centuries of colonial exploitation meant that the needs of the majority of the people were neglected in favour of the demands made by the metropolis or the colonizers. Thus the system of internal production was severely upset with the result that the Indian population had to face increasing difficulties for their own subsistence. Towards the end of this period, in 1786, the hunger suffered by the vast majority of the population became starvation; approximately one hundred thousand Mexicans died (out of a population of 6 million) and many of those who survived did so by eating weeds and roots. Alexander Von Humboldt, visiting this country said: "Mexico is the land of inequality". The Bishop of Valladolid added to this observation by remarking that in Mexico there were only two groups: "those who have nothing and those who have everything". The first group encompassed five million Indians, *mestizos* and mulattos, and one million whites; the second group, 20 thousand Spaniards and 10 thousand *criollos*

— The War of Independence took many lives and reduced the value of agricultural production by half. During the first three or four decades of turbulent independence —between 1821 and 1850 there were 50 different governments—, agricultural activity was directed towards local consumption, i.e. each region produced only according to its own requirements, under conditions of extreme poverty.

— After losing half of her territory and after suffering two foreign invasions, Mexico tried to organize herself into a liberal republic. During the Restauration of the Republic, or in the 30 years of dictatorship which followed that attempt, local subsistence production was again disrupted by the development of commercial exploitations directed towards internal or international markets.

— Throughout the present century, the conflict between opposed tendencies of production have been constantly felt. During the period of great revolutionary activity, agricultural production was again concentrated on local and regional needs, while commercial production decreased. However, at the beginning of the '30s the insufficiency of internal food production became even more dramatic and in the following ten years, grain imports oscillated between 10% and 15% of basic consumption while, at the same time, exports increased. Between 1950 and 1965 when the profit criteria coincided to a certain extent with internal priorities, self-sufficiency was rapidly achieved. There was even an excess of exportable basic products though internally most of the population still subconsumed. After 1965, however, internal needs were again relegated, in view of the Mexican economy's growing relation to a new international division of labour. This division assigned Mexico the task of exporting meat, fruits and vegetables, while importing grains and internally consuming some manufactured food products. This last process shows the tendencies of production over the past few years and up until 1980.

CROPS

Mexican agriculture has historically been dedicated to, and still is associated with, the production of grains, regardless of new perspectives.

Primitive Mexicans cultivated corn. They also produced beans, chiles and squash, as well as exploiting cactus plants and gathering cocoa and other fruits. They raised turkeys and dogs for their own consumption and hunted and fished.

During the colonial period, the structure of production underwent crucial changes. Wheat was used mainly for feeding the Spaniards, but when they took over responsibility for its cultivation it began to fill vast areas, especially in the central regions of the country. Sugar cane, coffee, tobacco, cotton and other commercial products aimed at the metropolitan market were also developed. Products derived from the exploitation of wood dyes came to occupy an important place among the exports to this market. Livestock increased notably and was used for transportation and agriculture, and to assist in mining activities, as well as for exporting rawhide and leather. At the end of the colonial period, the outstanding areas of production were corn cultivation, in the hands of the Indians, more or less integrated sugar plantations, single crop plantations, and the large cattle raising *haciendas*. The stability of the agricultural and cattle raising *haciendas* was considered mainly the result of its capacity for producing for the external market in times of plenty, while maintaining its sufficiency in times of crisis. During the first fifty years of Independence, commercial agriculture

decreased and crops were directed at local and regional markets.

This situation changed drastically under the Porfirian dictatorship when the land of the *campesinos* passed into the hands of the *hacendados*. These then used the land to satisfy the needs of the internal market by supplying corn, wheat, barley, sugar cane and other products. As the *hacendados* turned towards the external market, they concentrated on cattle raising and the production of coffee, rubber, henequen (Mexican agave) and sugar cane.

The first decades of the revolutionary period emphasized internal food needs while at the same time consistently developing crops for export. These were cotton, fruits and market vegetables, coffee, tobacco, sugar cane, chick pea and cattle, products which came to hold an important place in exports during the second half of this century.

After 1950, there was spectacular progress in the production of grains for fodder and some oleaginous plants, as well as certain fruits and market vegetables; cattle raising and aviculture also flourished. Basic crops showed a significant increase at the end of the '50s and beginning of the '60s, and even though since 1965 this has not been the case, they still play an important role.

The structure of agricultural and cattle raising in the last 20 years has been as follows:

TABLE I

PRODUCTION STRUCTURE BY TYPE OF PRODUCT (1960 - 1980)

Item	Percentage of Production Value
Basic food products (corn, wheat, rice and beans)	26
Fruits and market vegetables	18
Oleaginous plants	6
Fodder	6
Produce for industrialization	16
Other grains	0.5
Meat, milk and eggs	27.5
TOTAL	100.0

Source: Data taken from Dirección General de Economía Agrícola, Secretaría de Agricultura y Recursos Hidráulicos

During the last decade the ten main products, as far as value of production is concerned, have been:

TABLE II

MAIN CROPS (1970 - 1979)

Product	Total Value (in millions of 1970 pesos)	Percentage of Total Value of Agricultural and Cattle Raising Production
Corn	108,702	18.3
Feather cotton	55,242	9.3
Sugar cane	27,324	4.6
Wheat	26,730	4.5
Coffee	21,978	3.7
Sorghum	20,790	3.5
Orange	13,662	2.3
Green alfalfa	13,068	2.2
Tomato	12,474	2.1
Beans	11,286	1.9
TOTAL	311,256	52.4

Source: Data taken from Dirección General de Economía Agrícola, Secretaría de Agricultura y Recursos Hidráulicos

Up until the last century, almost a third of the Mexican territory was covered by forests. During the present century this proportion decreased to the point where forests cover only one fourth of the land. And this trend continues, as the result of irrational exploitation of wooded areas as well as their destruction to obtain agricultural and grazing lands. Although the country has great quantities of high quality forest resources their exploitation has not yet become an important element in the overall production framework. At present, the value of silviculture production represents about 5% of the total agricultural and cattle raising production. Mexico has never been an important exporter of forest-based goods, apart from wood dyes during the Colonial period. In fact, it even must import to cover its needs —90% of its paper requirements, for instance, are imported.

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RESOURCES

It is estimated that Mexico has about 30 million arable hectares of land, i.e. just under half a hectare of land per person. But only 16 million hectares have been used for cultivation: 8% of the national territory. A quarter of them have irrigation systems, while the rest are at the mercy of uncertain rainfalls.

Improved seeds, fertilizers and other agrochemical aids are used in less than 40% of the cultivated areas, but in more than 60% of the irrigated areas. Approximately 150,000 tractors with a total of ten million horsepower are available, the majority of these being concentrated in 10% of the exploited areas. Half of them use only beasts of burden.

A little more than a third of the national territory is covered by local weeds, tropical meadows, irrigated meadows and fodder. According to the 1970 adjusted census figures, the cattle population of the country consists of: 28 million bovines, 6 million horses, 11 million pigs, 8 million sheep, 9 million goats, 3 million mules, 3 million donkeys, 34 million egg-laying hens and about 210 million chickens for marketing.

Cattle raising exploitation is extensive and of low efficiency. The rate of bovine extraction, for instance, represents about 13% or a third of that of developed countries. On an average, milk cows produce around 500 litres per annum each, which approximately is one tenth of the average in European countries.

Of the 196 million hectares which make up the total of the national territory, 140 million are "exposed to exploitation". Half of these are in the hands of individuals, while the other half is in the hands of groups (*ejidos* or communities). The total area "exposed to exploitation" is distributed as follows: 16% for cultivation; 52% meadows and permanent grass lands; 14% hills or woods, and 18% other lands. The average size of the "exploitation areas" is 134 acres; 0.5% of them have more than 5,000 acres and they occupy almost half of the land, while 25% of the "exploitation areas" have less than one hectare (with 0.1% of the surface area), and 26% have from one to 5 hectares (with 0.5% of the surface area).*

According to the 1970 census figures, in that year there were 3'284,000 units of production in the 140 million hectares of land available for exploitation. This area was equally distributed between *ejidos* and privately exploited land; however, there were 2'122,000 *ejidatarios*; 825,000 private properties of less than 5

* These data have the obvious bias, based as they are on the 1970 census, of considering as a "unit of exploitation" both, those belonging to individuals, and those belonging to groups, which can be made up of several individuals.

hectares and 337,000 with more than 5 hectares. In 1970, the investment per private unit was 194,000.00 pesos and per *ejidal* unit, 32,000.00 pesos. The horsepower available on private property was almost three times more than in *ejidal* lands.

THE RURAL POPULATION AND THE PROTAGONISTS OF PRODUCTION

It has been estimated that about 40% of the population still lives in rural areas (villages of less than 2,500 inhabitants). Its integration per sex has very similar proportions between men and women. The pyramid of ages is as follows:

TABLE III

DISTRIBUTION OF RURAL POPULATION BY AGE

Range of Ages		Percentages
up to 4 years	16.94	
from 5 to 9 years	16.01	
from 10 to 14 years	13.26	
Subtotal		46.21
from 15 to 19 years	10.49	
from 20 to 29 years	15.12	
from 30 to 39 years	10.59	
Subtotal		36.18
from 40 to 49 years	7.40	
from 50 to 74 years	8.94	
over 75 years	1.24	
Subtotal		17.58
T O T A L		100.00

Source: Data taken from the Manual of Basic Socio-demographic Statistics of the Secretaría de Programación y Presupuesto

Using the system of land tenure, the rural population can be divided as follows:

— About two million heads of families have 95 million hectares in

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about 25,000 *ejidos* or Indian communities, within the system of collective property, in which individual or collective use of the land prevails.

- About one million heads of families occupy 83 million hectares under private ownership.

- Around half a million heads of families own almost 20 million hectares of national land under a system of individual possession (as *colonos*, in 783 agricultural colonies covering 7.5 million hectares, or as *nacionaleros*, in more than 10 million unlegalized hectares of land).

An estimation based on the 1960 census and on a direct study, classified producers according to their income. This study showed that 3.5% of the units of production produced 54% of the total value of the agricultural product and owned about 70% of irrigated areas and of capital. This group absorbs two thirds of the total of the country's modern input. Another 13% of exploited land provides a quarter of the value of production. In each of the units which make up this group a *campesino* family can find work and subsistence. And finally, a fifth of the value of production is provided by 83.5% of the exploited lands (50% of them provide only 3% of the total value). Under these conditions, a family has to obtain a great part of its income somewhere else in order to subsist.

According to another analytical approximation, 3% of the producers operate as owners of capital; 10% is made up of agricultural workers (either as permanent wage-earners or as migrant workers); another 10% is made up of *campesinos* who, besides working their small holdings, give their services as *jornaleros* in other agriculture concerns or in other activities which provide them with some additional income.

Average living conditions among the rural population has, among others, the following characteristics:

Literacy: 68%
Average schooling: 1.3 years
Life expectancy at birth: 45 years
Mortality rate: 9 per 1,000 inhabitants
Infant mortality rate: 74 per 1,000 born alive
Daily consumption of calories: 2,100
Daily consumption of proteins: 62 grams
Income per capita: 162 dollars per annum
Family size: 6 members
Type of dwelling: 91% of families live in their own house (with one or two rooms)
Physicians per 1,000 inhabitants: 0.3
Availability of drinking water: 60% of the villages
Availability of electrical energy: 76% of the villages, where more than 6 million *campesinos* have no electricity.

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These figures are averages and obviously do not show the great inequalities. Apart from the relative lag of the rural population compared to the urban one, it is important to keep in mind the differences which exist among the inhabitants in rural areas. These differences certainly exist between the rural populations in the northern and central areas and in the south; between Indian and non-Indians; between those working on basic crops and those working on commercial crops; among those on the high plateau in the fertile valleys, in tropical areas, dry areas, those in the mountains and those on the coast; between those who enjoy relative peace and tranquility and those who live in a climate of constant violence. A substantial group of Mexicans live under conditions which no one in his right mind could describe without indignation. Many tend to see these groups as some kind of dead weight, foreign to modern, powerful Mexico emerging from the cities. For others, far from being a burden, they are an explanation; an indignant explanation of Mexico's modernization.

CHAPTER TWO
THE MEXICAN AGRARIAN REFORM: AN UNFULFILLED DREAM, A CONTINUING NIGHTMARE, AN INCIPINT PROJECT

There must be hundreds of definitions of Agrarian Reform, enough to fill an encyclopedia. Some people even claim that this topic, Agrarian Reform, has produced more specialized literature than any other subject. However, we can no longer play around with academic arguments on this subject, and certainly not here.

In spite of all the technical and theoretical arguments which rage around the subject, there is wide agreement about the political nature of the processes of Agrarian Reform. It boils down to a political argument which reflects a social struggle for the control of productive resources. There are different explicit goals, different ways of seeing the process, and different procedures with varying characteristics. But above all, it is the historical context within which it developed that varies. Nevertheless, it is always a political process, whose birth, evolution and consequences depend on the correlation of social forces involved.

Seen within this approach, a large number of Agrarian Reforms have taken place in Mexico: each of them for its own reason with its own specific impact as well as its own stages of birth, development, climax and death. Some of them have fulfilled satisfactorily their historical function. Nevertheless, and in contrast to what has happened in other countries, where long periods of stability have resulted after these political and social upheavals, in Mexico all of them have been inconclusive. Within each "final result" of one of these upheavals, the basis for the next conflict has always been present, tearing apart the apparent "consolidation". And this is because none of them have ever succeeded in resolving an ever present basic contradiction: the nature, social or private, of control of the country's productive resources.

It has been observed that in one dimension of the problem, there has been an almost lineal advance in the agrarian evolution of Mexico,

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that came to its climax in 1918 and 1938: this dimension is that of the total control over national territory as an expression of popular and national will, which redeemed, the original property of the land in the name of the nation. This century, Mexico finally succeeded in taking over control, in modern terms, of its own territory. It had to do this, building on the remains of the theocratic state of the first Mexicans, on the inheritance of a colonial government (born from an absolute monarchy, in the process of constituting a national state) and on the teachings of democratic—liberal independence for which the country had to pay half of its territory.

Yet this advance has not paralleled the development registered in another open-ended dimension of the problem: the nature of the specific control over resources. On the one hand, it has always been maintained, with great vitality and vigour, that the social control of resources together with their autonomous and democratic exploitation, should be in the hands of their historical beneficiaries, the *campesinos*. But this drive has never been able to defeat, on a stable and permanent basis, the various opponents that wish to see private control of productive resources.

The *campesinos'* revolutionary force, shown in the first decades of the history of Agrarian Reform of this century, may be described in terms of a liberal-anarchist unfulfilled dream. The anti-agrarian answer to the *campesinos'* struggle, eventually became the kind of agrarian evolution which turned out to be a continuing nightmare: where the weight and scope of effective consistent control has been lost every time an attempt is made at dealing the final blow in order to consolidate this control. The result has always been that *campesinos* are totally excluded as participants in production. Within the violent and conflictive context which has characterized the whole process, an initial project has slowly begun to emerge in order to give modern social form to the *campesinos* quest. In this way the final and definitive phase of the Agrarian Reform would take shape: that of the social phase. This project is based on the horizons of the current productive regime, so as to provide a formula for the solution of its immediate contradictions, while at the same time providing perspectives which go beyond it.

THE PAST

The instabilities and upheavals experienced in the history of rural Mexico result from the latent and silent, or explosive and uncontrolled, nature of a conflict whose evolution has been associated with the fate and contradictions of four main protagonists: *campesino* communities (Indian and non-Indian); market-oriented exploitation; small independent producers, and agricultural workers. Obviously each one of these groups has adopted different structures and

ways of behaviour —according to its historical, economic and social context.

During the entire colonial period, some of the precolonial communities, succeeded in preserving life styles and forms of organizing production that became their principal basis for survival. Even though their techniques and internal forms of organization showed unusual stability, the communities themselves were forced into constant transformation, in order to adapt to a variety of outside pressures.

The first market-oriented exploitations emerged from the direct control of the Indian population. These markets were not only provided by the metropolis but also by the new urban conglomerations which were appearing at an accelerated pace (if one takes into account the rhythm then prevalent). After experimenting with a great variety of forms of domination, colonial rural exploitation adopted *haciendas* as the predominant form of organization. Along with this a certain number of small independent producers emerged, which was never totally successful either as a productive form, or as a social group. These groups, however, fulfilled several social and economic functions within the context in which they were situated. Both of these two forms of productive organization used agricultural workers in varying ways: as "slaves", if the term is accepted, in diminishing proportions throughout the period; "*peones acasillados*" (paid or unpaid); and "free" temporary or permanent workers, who one way or another were part of the tribute the communities paid to the *haciendas*.

The dynamics of the relationship between these elements tended to be resolved within regional or local perspectives and at the heart of the productive units. The Indian groups concentrated their efforts on their own communities and ethnic groups. Colonial power exercised over them, successively or simultaneously, was pressure, both centrifugal and centripetal that sometimes brought about their dispersal and sometimes their cohesion. The *hacendados* lacked authentic rural roots since their principal interests lay in the metropolis or in the cities of New Spain. The contradictions between *criollos* and Spaniards in rural environments were in general an extension of those in the urban world.

During the stagnation or recession of commercial agriculture in the first fifty years of Independence, some *haciendas* succeeded in consolidating themselves as integrated productive structures. But the majority of them tended to continue operating under a commercial perspective —under great heterogeneity with regard to the forms of domination practiced. The communities tended to remain committed to resistence and to progress in local or regional spheres. In this period, even though the small independent producers barely survived, it is very probable that their numbers increased consistently. However, the period was characterized by the break-down of rural productive mechanisms and the weakening of the different forms of

social organization of rural life. This, in spite of the fact that the global situation was geared towards the development of local or regional production for self-consumption.

In the second half of the XIX century the communities underwent an acute process of decline, mainly due to the increased pressure exerted upon them by the *haciendas*, as these progressively defined their commercial features. Communities lost importance as productive organizations when their relationship with the land, which had previously allowed them to exist as such, was weakened or extinguished. Apart from those who succeeded in retaining or reconquering their land, especially in the south and southeast of Mexico, the communities ceased to exist as structures of production, even though they retained different functions associated with the survival of the population. The strengthening of the *haciendas* went along with the development of the small independent producers (*rancheros*, small land owners, tenants) who, at the beginning of the century, numbered approximately half a million. Although they tended to associate their interests with those of the *haciendas*, very often they were closer to the *campesinos* than to the *hacendados* in the concrete organization of their lives. As far as the *hacendados* were concerned, they were directly linked to the structure of urban power, and in continuous interaction with it, along with the diversification of their own interests.

THE REVOLUTION ERUPTS

In 1910, when revolutionary violence burst out, a small nucleus of *hacendados* —less than 1% of the population— owned 97% of the land. The rural population had no land and worked as *peones acasillados*, labourers or 'slaves'. The agricultural and cattle raising and the agroindustrial *haciendas* were extensive rural corporations: one *hacienda* had seven million hectares under the control of one owner. The *hacendados*, both Mexican and foreign, lived luxuriously in provincial capitals, in Mexico City, in the United States or in Europe. Their administraters, foremen and accountants were in charge of the management of the *haciendas*. Labour supply in the *haciendas* increased more on the basis of *pegujal* than that of wages. The *pegujal* was a piece of land "conceded" to the worker by the *hacendado*. It guaranteed enough food for the family's subsistence. The worker very seldom received his wage, since this returned to the hands of the *hacendado* through the *tienda de raya*. The "free" labourers, nevertheless, who did not have a dwelling place, a piece of land to cultivate, or a permanent job, already represented an increasing number among the rural population. They were the first, along with the "slaves", who enrolled in the revolutionary army, attracted by Emiliano Zapata's slogan of "Tierra y libertad" (land and freedom). They were also fertile soil for the anarchist ideals which prevailed among the radical ideologies of that time, especially in the labour

movement.

In the first years of revolutionary action, the historic content of the land workers' claims reinforced the unity of their action. Indians, *peones acasillados*, many small land owners, and agricultural workers from many different backgrounds, joined forces in the fight to recover the land. Nevertheless, these claims did not always include the elimination of the *hacienda* as a form of productive organization. For example, in Emiliano Zapata's "Plan de Ayala", the most important agrarian document of the Mexican Revolution, a proposal was made only for the expropriation, with previous indeminization, of one third of the *latifundios*, as well as the return of *ejidos* and communal lands. Apart from tactical considerations, which might have influenced in the defining of the goals of the Plan, it must be pointed out that the *campesinos* were more concerned with the recovery of lands which had been taken from the *ejidos* and the communities, than with the elimination of the *hacienda* system.

In 1917, after seven years of revolutionary struggle and violent disputes among the different political factions, with between one and two million casualties and many *haciendas* destroyed or abandoned, the backbone of the Porfirian system of oppression and exploitation was finally broken. In its place, the new Mexican State began to emerge.

The 1917 Constitution expressed the country's new economic and sociopolitical aspirations, combining the liberality of Juárez's 1857 constitution with the new social orientation of the State. It was hoped through this new state, to safeguard the people's rights and to ensure the construction of a more just society by means of free education, protection of labour, and agrarian reform. The latter was explicitly based on the principle of sovereignty, as covered by the 27th Article of the Constitution: "The ownership of land and water within the limits of national territory, correspond first and foremost to the nation, which has had and has the right to transmit this control to individuals in the form of private property... The Nation will have at any time the right to impose on private property any modalities dictated by the public good, as well as regulating the utilization of natural resources to be expropriated in order to make an equitative distribution of wealth and to ensure its conservation."

The Constitutional Congress which formulated the Constitution had a large *campesino* sector. This was only two years after the leaders of the two largest revolutionary *campesino* armies had occupied the presidential chair. In the following years the Federal Government's power was progressively consolidated despite the constant competition with regional and local powers. This integration of the federal power was always defined in agrarian terms: the correlation between the new and old *latifundistas* who were waiting for a chance to return and the agrarian forces of the revolution.

... AND STAGNATES

The *hacendados* were unable to oppose the revolution with any unified power. They were able to survive through their ability to adapt to the new conditions by taking advantage of all contradictions and difficulties among different revolutionary groups. Thus, they were quickly able to form organic links with the new power structure, while the *campesinos* were unable to control the process for which they had fought. From 1916 to 1920, 334 "legalizations" were issued for an equal number of *ejidos*, with a total surface of 382,000 hectares. The 77,000 *ejidatarios* who benefited from this received less than five hectares each. The situation regarding land under "provisional ownership" was under heavy discussion. This involved between three and four million hectares which had been occupied directly by the *campesinos*. In order to better appreciate the full meaning of these figures, one has to keep in mind that the "*hacienda* system" was in possession of 113 million hectares.

From 1920 on, less emphasis was placed on the radical agrarian reform proposed in the 27th Article of the Constitution while more was placed on the development of small or medium land holdings, under different forms of ownership. Thus the question of the elimination of the "*hacienda* system" was eluded through the liberal coding of the Constitution. In Zapata areas, as well as in different regions of the country where radical groups were still putting into effect agrarian claims, real and profound changes in productive organization took place. Yet this was by no means the general situation, which was characterized by the systematic blockading of *campesino* initiative. In this way, along with the *ejidos* which were inevitably revived by local or regional *campesino* power, the "*hacienda* system" persisted and small holdings developed, both of which were more in line with predominant interests of the groups which gradually took over hegemonic power.

In fact the purpose of returning the *ejidos* was not only to make the *campesinos* exchange their guns for ploughs. It was also to have the *ejido* fulfill a necessary function creating necessary conditions for the *campesinos* to complement their infrasubsistance wage. The *ejido* was intended to have a transitory nature; i.e. it would be the nursery, breeding farmers for small or medium land holdings, who would then follow the traditional capitalist mode of agricultural development. In this way, the trend to divide up the *ejido* in order to accelerate the process of its extinction, was born from the very first land legalization processes.

During this period, the *campesinos* lacked any kind of organization which would have enabled them to give coherence and clarity to their specific interests. But above all they lacked organizations which would have made the other social classes take heed of those interests. An example of the fundamental weakness of these organizations, which supposedly represented the *campesinos'* interests at this time, was the *Partido Nacional Agrarista*. It neither arose to support

direct opposition to the *hacendados*, nor was it the *campesinos* who organized it. It was the first political organization explicitly and vigourously to advocate the need to continue agrarian reform after the fighting period of the revolution came to an end. Around 1924, it was the political party with the greatest political power. It was unable, however, to draw up any concrete proposals: it relegated the central problem of productive organization to a second level and lacked specific propositions for putting into practice the 27th Article of the Constitution it supposedly defended. It is not strange, therefore, that the party gradually disappeared as a political organization within a few years, as its leaders were absorbed into government service. Something similar happened to the *Confederación Nacional Agraria* which in 1923 had broken away from the *Partido Nacional Agrarista*. It too tended to follow official guidelines. In 1924 the *Confederación Nacional Agraria* proposed the voluntary break-up and redistribution of the *haciendas* which came, of course, to nothing.

In this context the *hacendados* were able to successfully devise ways of controlling their properties. Often they achieved this by sharing them with the revolutionary leaders. At the same time, the number of small independent producers, rapidly increased. Some of these simply reassumed the function they had had before the Revolution and since the liberal reform of the *República Restaurada*. Others emerged from the agrarian redistribution itself, as a direct consequence of the *pegujal*. And yet others came from the urban post-revolutionary world. All of them received varying kinds of support from the different governments which thus tried to avoid a radical confrontation with the *haciendas*.

Right up to 1934, the Agrarian Reform was characterized by the restitution of lands to communities deprived of them by Porfirio Díaz. It was also characterized by the creation of new centres of population. Both these courses of action involved the expropriation of lands from some *haciendas*, thus reducing them to the constitutionally stipulated limits, i.e. 100 irrigated hectares or its equivalent in land under seasonal use. The legislating body exempted the agro-industrial units from expropriation and tried to regulate the administration of production on the lands given to the *campesinos*.

Both the administrative actions and the legal declarations of this period highlighted two opposing concepts of the objectives of agrarian reform and of the social and economic functions of the centres of population. One point of view which saw the State as responsible for promoting social justice through the distribution of public wealth, simply tried to endow the *campesino* with some means of subsistence. The other point of view, visualized within agrarian reform, under either *ejidal* or communal form, the basis for supporting a collective system of land possession and exploitation. Under this system agricultural and cattle raising technology could be developed, consequently it provided a more rational and promising way of production than the small holding system of exploitation. The latter

point of view had very little influence over the agrarian reform of this period even though the *Comisión Nacional Agraria* issued a circular in 1920 which set out these concepts. This happened because the agrarian course of action at this time was more in line with the 1920 first *Ley de Ejidos*. This law established that all the lands given to a rural community —i.e. those given to *ejidos*— should be divided into individual plots of land, the size of which should be sufficient "to produce for those working them twice the amount of the average local wage". (This minimum was defined a little later as plots of land varying from three to five irrigated hectares or its equivalent in other types of land.) Only forests, pasture grounds and water were assigned to be collectively exploitated. In keeping with this, in 1927 it was established that small holdings could be as much as fifty times the size of the individual *ejidal* plot of land. In 1925, along the same lines, the *Ley de Riegos* directly promoted the formation of a "rural middle class" as the strategic key to the creation of new irrigated areas and a more highly developed agriculture. The *Ley del Patrimonio Parcelario Ejidal* in the same year, was created to "protect" the *ejidatarios* by providing them with individual title deeds, which could not be sold, mortgaged or seized. This meant the definitive breaking up of *ejidos* into plots.

Between 1917 and 1934, about 11 million hectares were divided into 6 thousand *ejidos* among nearly a million *campesinos*, giving them about 10 hectares each. Starting in the '20s the *Comisiones Nacionales de Irrigaciones y Caminos*, the *Banco Nacional de Crédito Agrícola* and four other regional *ejidal* banks, as well as a strong drive for rural education, resulted in an active rural development.

Throughout this period, the *hacendados* were losing effective political power. In 1931 they were even denied the right to ask for legal protection in regard to land expropriation. This fact, together with a renewal of *campesino* pressure, probably explains the terms of the *Código Agrario* which in 1934 tried to clarify the confusions created by the proliferation of agrarian laws. This *Código* reduced to fifty the number of irrigated hectares or its equivalent in land under seasonal use which could be the maximum surface of non-negotiable small private holdings. These would make land available to *peones acasillados*, *peones aparceros* and tenants previously excluded from land redistribution. The Code concentrated on the restitution of *ejidos* to be assigned in the form of individual plots of land, with a minimum surface of four irrigated hectares or its equivalent in land under seasonal use. (This distinction between irrigated and land under seasonal use is, in fact, the most precise definition arrived at, with regard to the quality of the land which was the object of the reform.)

It is evident that during this period the *campesinos*, apparent victors of the revolution, did not succeed in satisfying their aspirations. Most of them had remained without access to the land and those who had it, did not have the economic resources for its ade-

quate exploitation. In spite of this, or probably because of this, at the end of the 1920s, the faction that had succeeded in acquiring hegemony in the revolutionary government decided that the agrarian period of the Mexican Revolution had come to its end, and that it was necessary to open up the way for conventional modernization by stimulating small private properties. The anarchist ideal of the *campesinos* fulfilling their aspirations by recovery of the land and a return to their community organizations, was strongly opposed by a model of agrarian development which came closer to the capitalist trends observable in the rest of the economy. In order to give coherence to such modernizing efforts, the dominant faction deemed it necessary to bring together all the revolutionary groups, which still maintained their spheres of power, under one umbrella through the creation of the *Partido Nacional Revolucionario*.

One of the *campesino's* answers to the antiagrarian movements of the time, came in the form of a messianic movement, the "*Cristero*" Movement. The nature of the movement and the alliances it established, which were paradoxically also antiagrarian, meant that contradictions with Federal Power were reinforced and thus a severe repression was provoked. Other movements, however, had developed at the same time. Their strength at regional levels was felt on different occasions, and in 1926 they brought about the creation of the *Liga Nacional Campesina* which grouped together organizations from 15 states and claimed to represent 400 thousand *campesinos*. This league proposed a radical confrontation with the *latifundistas*. It also tried to get involved in the labourers struggle and looked for ways of socializing the land and the means of production. When invited to join the *Partido Nacional Revolucionario*, this coalition split and lost strength as an independent group at the beginning of the '30s. However, the leaders of the league were the same *campesinos* that rallied and tried to redirect the country's social process by supporting Lázaro Cárdenas for President.

THE REVOLUTION MOVES INTO ACTION AGAIN...

Between 1934 and 1940, Lázaro Cárdenas' government redistributed 20 million hectares among 11,000 *ejidos* thus benefitting three quarters of a million *campesinos*, who received an average of 25.8 hectares each. In six years amost twice as much land was redistributed as that redistributed in an immediately preceding period three times as long.

Under Cárdenas, the *ejido* became the pilar of the national agricultural economy, i.e. it occupied half the cultivated land. A decisive step forward in this new direction was taken in 1935, with the expropriation of the large agroindustrial enterprises, safeguarded up until then by the fear of affecting production. These enterprises were handed over as cooperative *ejidos* to the workers and

peones who had organized fighting unions within them and had demanded their expropriation by the government.

The fact that the Cárdenas administration distributed many more hectares than all the previous revolutionary governments, obviously reflected the awakening of the old agrarian revolutionary principles. In this period the strength of an increasing number of small independent producers began to be felt but most of the *hacendados* were either eliminated or forced to adopt defensive attitudes. All this was possible and even reinforced because of the support Cárdenas gave to the *campesino* mobilization and, above all, to the organization of production on a collective basis. In order to ensure greater organic integration of the social basis which could bring about agrarian redistribution, a Presidential decree in 1935, created the *Confederación Nacional Campesina*. During the following three years important mobilizations took place. This even included the delivering of arms to the *campesinos* in order to defend redistributed lands. It also lead to a Constituent Congress of the Confederation, which was attended by many *campesino* organizations from throughout the entiere country. The agrarian redistribution itself, a vigourous step towards the collective organization of production, together with large supporting programs, were put into practice by means of a clear understanding between *campesino* organizations and federal political foodwill. In this way, they were successfully able to face opposing interests, i.e. the ancient Porfirian *latifundistas*, new private commercial agriculture, local and regional structures of economic and political domination, and the important national and international economic interests.

... AND FLOUNDERS ONCE MORE

The internal and external forces at the end of the '30s and the beginning of the '40s brought about the conditions which lead to the cancelling of this trend in the Mexican agrarian process. This happened before there was time to consolidate the process or to set a strong basis for its total development. After 1937, the year of the most intense land redistribution (more than five million hectares) the Cárdenas administration began to decelerate the pace of redistribution. In 1938, a government agency was created to take care of the problems of small land holders, the *Oficina de la Pequeña Propiedad*. Although this agency was closed in 1940 because of the conflicts it had generated, its actions were significant, if quantitatively modest. In two years it had taken 45,000 hectares from *campesinos* and given them back to their previous owners.

In order to understand the following period, it would be helpful to glance at the balance of agrarian reform of the revolutionary governments up to 1940. For a quarter of a century, 1.7 million *ejidatarios* had received nearly 30 million hectares, i.e. 15% of

the total national territory and 23% of the total censored area. However, only a quarter of these lands were suitable for agriculture and less than 5% irrigated; almost half were pasture land and a fifth, forest land. The surface area per person was increased in inverse relation to its quality: from 2.5 hectares in 1919 to almost 40 hectares in 1940; the average for this period is 17.5 hectares. The total number of *ejidatarios* occupied more than half the agricultural land of the country, even though their lands were in general simply subsistence plots.

Small private properties showed spectacular increases in the 1930s, i.e. the number of holdings of less than five hectares was increased by 61% and their surface by 136%. In 1940 there were almost one million rural land holdings along these lines, which accounted for one third of the total number of holdings in the country. Nevertheless, they occupied less than 1% of land covered by the census (while the *ejidatarios* with 56.8% of land holdings occupied 22.4% of the total area). Private holdings from five to one thousand hectares (*ranchos*) represented one tenth of the holdings and 15% of the surface (with an average of 69.8 hectares per holding). Finally, there were 9,697 holdings with more than 1,000 hectares; 1,472 with more than 10,000 hectares, and 301 of more than 40,000 hectares. These *haciendas* represented 0.3% of the holdings but possessed more than 60% of the available land. The 300 owners of more than 40,000 hectares occupied nearly 32 million hectares, that is a quarter of the areas covered by the census of 1940, and one sixth of national territory.

In the 1930s, the number of private holdings of more than 1,000 hectares decreased by 27.6% and their total area by 22.6%; those of more than 10 thousand hectares decreased by 18.8% and their total area by 21.2%. As is obvious, *ejidos* and small properties were formed at the expense of the *haciendas*.

It is useful to take into account the spatial distribution of the large holdings. Half of the holdings with over 1,000 hectares were located in the northern region and 17% in the northern Pacific region. Also 61% of the holdings with more than ten thousand hectares were located in the north. There were none in Zapata's state: Morelos. Also in the north there was a concentration of *ranchos* (from one to five thousand hectares). A large number of these were also found in the Gulf states (16.1%) and in the northern Pacific region (11.2%). As far as the *ejidos* were concerned, almost 40% were located in the central areas (where there were almost no holdings with more than 40 thousand hectares and few over 1,000 hectares) and just 20% in the north.

In 1940, the population of the *ejidos* was only 25% of the total population, one third that of villages with less than 10,000 inhabitants and 40% that of villages with less than two thousand five hundred inhabitants. In each *ejido* there was an average of 109 *ejidatarios*. In five states (Yucatan, Mexico, Morelos, Campeche and Na-

yarit) the population of the *ejidos* represented more than 40% of the total in the state.

In 1910, 0.2% of the active rural population owned 87% of the occupied property (60% of the total territory). In 1940, 0.3 of the owners had 61.9% of the areas covered by the census (42% of the total). In 1910 the areas controlled by 8,431 *haciendas* (in the hands of a smaller number of owners) consisted of 113 million hectares. In 1940, there were 9,697 holdings with more than one thousand hectares which occupied nearly 80 thousand million hectares.

In 1910 there were 48,633 *ranchos* that occupied 9.7 million hectares: an average of 199.4 hectares per *rancho*. In 1940, there were 280,639 *ranchos* (holdings from 1 to 5 thousand hectares) that occupied 19.7 million hectares with an average of 69.8 hectares per *rancho*.

In 1910 there were 109,378 small land owners. They occupied 1.4 million hectares, i.e. an average of 12.8 hectares. In the same year there were just over three million *peones acasillados*, *peones aparceros* and tenant farmers.

In 1940, 1.7 million *ejidatarios* had 30 million hectares (17.5 hectares per plot of land) while 928,593 private *minifundistas* had one million hectares (properties with less than five hectares).

In 1910, 91.3% of the active rural population lacked access to the land; by 1940, less than a third of the population found itself in the same condition. Even though half of the active agricultural population, 1.9 million people, was made up of agricultural *jornaleros*, many of them (about 700 thousand) *ejidatarios* or private *minifundistas* who complemented their income by selling their labour force.

This was the structure of land tenure when Cárdenas handed over the Presidency of the Republic to Manuel Avila Camacho. Although it was by no means clear that the efficiency of ejidal production was inferior to that of private production, discussion about it was again revived.

After ten years, Calles' comments on the agrarian reform became fashionable again: "If we want to be honest with ourselves, we, the sons of the Revolution, have the obligation to confess that agrarianism, in the way we have understood and practiced it, has been a failure up until now. Happiness is not found in a plot of land, if one does not have the necessary skills or tools to cultivate it. In this way, we are only leading them towards disaster by creating false hopes and encouraging their sloth... Until now we have been handing out lands left, right and centre, and all we have succeeded in producing is a horrifying committment for the Nation. We have to put a stop to our failures. Each of the state governments must set a limit within which those who still have the right to ask for land,

do so; but once the limit is reached, not a word more should be said about the matter. Then everyone must be assured of security in order to stimulate initiative and public credit".

Calles' goals, interrupted by Cárdenas' agrarian system, began to take shape after 1940. In Avila Camacho's administration, land redistribution slowly came to a halt. During the six years of his government, the same amount was redistributed as Cárdenas had redistributed in only one year: 1937 (about five million hectares). At the same time collectivization, associated then with *campesino* mobilization, was substituted for support to small private holdings and in particular to modern commercial agriculture.

Thus, while *ejidos* and communities began a period of increasing deterioration —with few exceptions in time and space— *latifundios* or agro-businesses were dedicated to bringing about the "Mexican agricultural miracle". The 1940s saw the beginnings of vigourous infrastructure development. Much of this was concentrated in the north of the Republic, precisely in the areas where large holdings, *haciendas* and *ranchos* were found. In irrigation projects, for example, more than 60% of public investment between 1940 and 1970 was channelled to the north and north Pacific zones. This meant that only in three states, where 20% of holdings with over 1,000 hectares were located but with only 9% of the *ejidos* and 6% of the *ejidatarios*, had the benefit of 40% of the investments for irrigation purposes. This, added to large programmes of promotion (described in the following two chapters) meant that these commercial farmers flourished in the '50s. Their links with large urban capital grew and they developed within the legal framework of the small private holdings and the cattle *latifundios* (permitted as a result of the vagueness of the law) or within the illegal process of open or simulated *latifundios* and the leasing of plots of land. These farmers acted in political terms through the *Confederación Nacional de la Pequeña Propiedad* (incorporated to the popular sector of the *Partido Revolucionario Institucional* the new name for the old *Partido Nacional Revolucionario*), or through employer organizations, formally excluded from political activity, but with great effective force for putting pressure on the authorities.

Both administrations, that of Miguel Aleman (1946 - 52) and that of Ruiz Cortines (1952 - 58) redistributed about 3 million hectares: the equivalent of Cárdenas in 1938, when he had laready decelerated the pace.

Between 1940 and 1970 the country underwent a demographic and economic transformation which quadrupled the population and inverted the rural-urban terms of integration: 65% of the total rural population, in 1940, was already urban in 1970. The agrarian reform in this period was controlled by conservative criteria. These criteria supported the small and medium agricultural holdings basing themselves on the 1946 constitutional reform which again extended to 100 hectares the minimum of non-negotiable land. Government encourage-

ment resulted in the creation of private technified agricultural enterprises; the opening up of new irrigated lands placed mainly in private hands, the construction of infrastructure for communications and services, scientific research on grains, the ample use of credit for private activity, the individualization of *ejidal* production and the pulverization of the cooperativist *ejidos*. In fact, since the idea was to bring about a revolution in the productive apparatus in order to raise productivity and achieve accelerated growth of production, then the agrarian process had to be frozen, not encouraged. Even though redistribution continued throughout these thirty years, important changes did not take place with regard to the structure of land tenure. The 19 million hectares which were redistributed throughout this period was land of poorer quality and less extensive than those of previous periods (the average plot of land was 29.3 hectares per *ejidatario*. Besides, this amount was in some respects just an illusion, i.e. the redistribution stated in presidential resolutions and statistically registered did not correspond to the lands actually handed over. At the beginning of 1970, there were nearly 30 million hectares of land "redistributed" only on paper, because the presidential resolutions were still pending execution. It was possible for this process to develop because of the decisive participation of one element of the local and regional power structure which had begun to proliferate since the beginning of the Cárdenas period: the *cacique*. The agrarian movement did in fact manage to bring about the destruction of the old productive units, associated with the Porfirian *haciendas*. However, it rarely succeeded in providing alternatives by means of the collective organization of the *campesinos* which could substitute these old units. Federal support for this was necessarily limited, even in Cárdenas' time and it could not help the *campesinos*' economic limitations, or their lack of resources adequately to exploit the lands given to them.

Under these conditions, the *caciques* strengthened their position in the rural communities as a cohesive element for the production process but without organizing it. Their origin was varied, they could be: the old *latifundista*, the local merchant, the agrarian leader who led the fight for redistribution, a government agent who took part in the agrarian process or in a subsequent activity, etc. Little by little the *cacique* acquired specific functions, as an intermediary between the *campesinos* on the one hand and "national society" on the other. Some authors have identified them as political intermediaries whose function is to manipulate and control the *campesino* groups, on behalf of federal or state power. For others, the political function of the *cacique* has been founded on a strictly economic basis. This last option seems to come closest to reality. In some cases their political functions work two ways: the cacique acts as the *campesinos*' spokesman with the authorities —in order to get public support— and he also represents the political apparatus to the *campesino* group. But both actions are based on his strictly economic function which he tries to promote. It is a function of accumulation based on expropriation of the *campesinos*' economic surplus, through specific mechanisms, clearly differentiated from those

used in relation to the industrial proletariat. The *cacique* structure of local or regional power acquired increasing importance, along with other political forces on the national scene. During the Second World War those forces which, since the end of the last decade, began to worry about the trends of Cárdenas' administration, organized themselves more clearly and firmly. By 1943 North American interest in the phases of development of Mexican agriculture was already obvious. Accelerated industrialization was seen to be vital for big cities. And in order to bring this about it was necessary to be able to rely on resources which only the agricultural sector could provide. The intensive accumulation that the process demanded —together with the process of concentration of wealth— could not be achieved if the popular movements of the previous decade were allowed to continue. In order to put a stop to them, it was first necessary to weaken the coalition between *campesinos* and workers, which had made them possible, and secondly it was necessary to gain control over their organizations. Control of workers' organizations was based on the continuous granting of economic advantages to the most organized groups. This made it possible to offer a constant improvement in real income for those groups, while at the same time lowering their position in the global scheme of distribution of the social product. As far as the *campesinos* were concerned, in order to put a drastic end to agrarian trends, it was considered necessary to support the forces that opposed them, in addition to using mechanisms of manipulation and repression.

The so-called agrarian development plan which characterized the post-war period was thus initiated. The constitutional reforms of 1947 worked as an efficient means of blockading *campesino* demands for land and created a climate of "confidence" and security with regard to land tenure. This, in turn, stimulated private investment in agriculture. The old agricultural interests of the northeast of the Republic —where the biggest *haciendas* in the country were found before the Revolution— succeeded in attracting most public resources for agricultural and cattle raising improvement, in terms of the so-called "Green Revolution" (see next chapter). This group, in fact, succeeded in directly influencing the global political orientation of agrarian development. This group also assigned to high productivity areas the task of supplying food and raw materials to the whole of the population, while at the same time employing, along with industry and services, the *campesinos* labour force which would thus be forcibly removed from rural communities. The *campesinos* themselves would have the job of providing resources for financing industrialization, feeding themselves during the process and constituting the reserve labour army required by urban development.

The correlation of forces that favoured this process was expressed throuhgh the intervention of the *cacique* on the local or regional level. The *Confederación Nacional Campesina* tended to function in this period as a negotiating body. On the one hand, it provided an outlet for the most intense *campesinos*' pressures and on the other,

it acted as an instrument of control by minimizing the coherence and strength of the *campesino* struggle.

In order to overcome these factors, various attempts were made to form independent *campesino* organizations. During the post-war years, one sector of the worker organizations, which had been the vanguard during Cárdenas' government, separated from the other organizations. First, an abortive attempt was made to create an *Alianza Obrero y Campesina*. This was followed by the creation of the *Unión General de Obreros y Campesinos de México*. This Union slowly began to loose its labour groups, but for several years was seen as a highly combative *campesino* organization which by the end of the 1950s had achieved some resounding successes. In the 1960s, in the heat of the *Movimiento de Liberación Nacional* —associated with the political effervescence of the Cuban Revolution— the *Central Campesina Independiente* was created. For several years, this organization vigorously supported agrarian claims, especially in the northeast of the Republic.

By 1965, the crisis of the rural development model became apparent, and *campesinos* found themselves facing an extremely adverse correlation of forces. Their efforts to promote their demands were disjointed: small uprisings, hunger marches, guerrilla movements with varying goals and characteristics. Neither the *Confederación Nacional Campesina* nor the *Central Campesina Independiente* seemed capable of gathering together and channelling their interests. This meant that rural tensions increased daily and found expression in the proliferation of *campesino* mobilization. The economic and productive dynamism lost on a global scale, was reconcentrated in areas where agribusiness could exercise stricter control over operations and through which commercial agriculture could be more easily introduced into the international economy. Thus, by the early 1970s, the situation had become very explosive and the characteristic polarization of rural Mexico, seen throughout history, now concentrated social contradictions in the forms of participation in production.

THE '70s: THE MORE THINGS CHANGE, THE MORE THEY REMAIN THE SAME

In 1970 the issue was not only that of land tenure. At that time, more than ever, the real issues were: the control of productive resources, the actual planning of production, the general thrust of the effort made, and the true benefits of the process.

Above all, the general thrust of the productive efforts was being questioned. In accordance with the theory of comparative advantages it was necessary for production to remain conditioned by supply and demand, and for the strict criteria of prifitability to predominate over improvement plans and efforts to increase productivity. This position was promoted not only for one type of crop but for an en-

tire spectrum of products. Opposing this view was the argument favouring self-sufficiency in national food production. The former advocated continued reliance on modern agribusiness for production, while the latter advocated dependence on *campesino* involvement in basic production, which would imply a drastic change in policies.

Increasing *campesino* pressure, as well as the repercussions of the world food crisis which came to a head in 1972, were decisive elements in adopting the self-sufficiency model. This model was also intended as a way of giving specific attention to *campesino* demands. An important part of public resources went to rural zones; the guaranteed prices of basic products were increased; and effort to organize producers was developed. In terms of the agrarian reform, an effort was made to clear up the backlog of land expropriations which had already been resolved but which had not yet been executed. Some spectacular decisions were taken on the redistribution of a few large *latifundios* which until then had remained unaffected.

The encouragement given to the collectivization process took on different characteristics in this phase than during the Cárdenas period. The idea was no longer to stimulate an autonomous process of control and action on land holding by the *campesinos*, but to subject the entire productive structures so far developed to a specific kind of rationality —that of globality of the system. The so-called agrarian development of the previous 40 years had in fact resulted in the proliferation of productively active elements who took on the status of "small independent producers". They fitted into different land tenure systems such as small holdings, *ejidos*, '*comunas*', 'colonies' that appeared to be dedicated to individual or family exploitation of their plots. In fact, however, the weakening of the *campesino* productive organization, based on collective effort, had "individualized" exploitation in order more easily to subject them to the control of the reestablished *latifundios* or commercial agribusiness. This kind of control, habitually exercised through the power of *caciques*, the leasing of plots and other illegal procedures had not, strictly speaking, given rise to a new organization of production. In place of the large agricultural holdings of the prerevolutionary period, business organizations had emerged that controlled the productive processes from without. Thus, production was being conditioned and determined by powers not directly involved in their operation. The logic of these operations also demanded that *campesino* labour retain the conditions for its own reproduction, in productive units that remained outside the direct control of the dynamic agribusiness system, even though they were under the control of many different types of commercial agents. As is obvious, this process, partially affected by international forces, had deepened the rural economic and productive crisis. This, in turn, accelerated rural migration and weakened, on a national scale, efforts being made towards social and political organization.

1975 saw the beginning of a great effort made towards collectivization in the hope of finding an answer to the problems. Part of this

effort was aimed at the historical *campesino* initiative of direct participation, which managed to take advantage of these efforts to forward its own development goals. Yet most of it functioned merely as an additional way of *campesino* control. As one researcher has pointed out, this effort towards collectivization structured from without, constituted a mechanism of formally presenting as *campesino* initiatives, decisions which had actually been taken behind their backs by outside superior forces. Technical agencies held power, without responsibility, while *campesinos* had responsability without power. Both the effort towards collectivization and land redistribution were subjected to plans for increased production without ever really intending concrete changes in the socio-economic structure.

The first half of the decade witnessed impressive *campesino* mobilization, similar to those of the '30s. There were, however, significant differences. For thirty years *campesino* organizations had gradually been worn down and become disarticulated. *Campesinos* were therefore sceptical when presented once again with the opportunity to mobilize themselves without being subjected to repression. The political leaders were equally dubious and seemed worried that the mobilization they were promoting might escape from their control, if it gained any real autonomy. In many ways the *campesinos* were being shuffled like a pack of cards, while simultaneously their real autonomous intention for mobilization were being cancelled or blocked. The attempts at restructuring the *campesino* organizations suffered the same fate: there were agreements imposed from above which never got down to the roots of the movement. Thus the *Pacto de Ocampo*, an agreement signed by the principal *campesino* organizations of the country in order to unify their plan of action, had only short-term effects and soon came to nothing. The same thing happened with the *Congreso Permanente Agrario* formed shortly before the *Pacto*. Many factors prevented the *campesinos* from effectively taking over the process of change which seemed to be under way. Among these factors were the very speed of events; the ways in which improvement programmes were implemented (blockading any effective *campesino* participation); the institutional and socio-political inertia resulting from forty years of so-called agrarian development; the magnitude of the political and economic pressures of multinational agroindustry; the short-sighted and aggressive behaviour of interests affected by the winds of change; unrealistic anti-capitalist agrarian rhetoric, divorced from reality; the vast gap between the true *campesino* organizations —at both local and regional levels— and their formal organizations. Consequently, the *campesinos* were unable to prevent this process of change or to refocus it on previous tendencies. In 1976, the interests of large agribusinesses exercised decisive pressure on the authorities, within the politically dangerous context of the currency devaluation which had been decided during the period of transfer of power from one government administration to the next. The pretext used was that "urgent" attention had been paid to some old *campesino* agrarian dispute. This took place at the very heart of the nation's agrocommercial system (in Sonora), ten days before the transfer of government.

In the following years the crisis worsened. The food deficit increased notably. Inflation adversely affected rural income and unemployment increased. On both local and regional levels, "solutions by force" increasingly substituted economic policies. Once again, the specific importance, the capacity for negotiation, and the margin for maneuvering the large national *campesino* organizations were reduced. They became, once more, elements of control over popular mobilization. The *cacique* power structure gained new strength -subdued, yet more and more firmly linked to the interests of national and international capital whose hegemony over the land became more and more obvious.

The rural problem continued at the forefront. While hopes for real land redistribution tended to be discarded, together with historical claims of *campesinos* and their organizations, at the same time the ineffectiveness of "solutions" attempted throughout the century, was being acknowledged. It seemed inevitable that a balance would be made, and it was made.

A survey of the structure of land holding throughout the country revealed the following facts: 25,000 *ejidos* and communities with 95 million hectares, and a collective system of land tenure; one million small holders, with 83 million hectares; 784 agrarian colonies with 7.5 million hectares, receiving private profits from federal property; 300 thousand *nacionaleros* with 5 million hectares of non-legalized federal lands.

Apart from the unbalanced economic structure of the producers under the differing tenure systems, the survey also revealed a tremendous backlog in agrarian reform. It was considered vital that this be "completed" as soon as possible. The situation was described by the present President of the Republic, in his third Annual Report to the Nation, in the following terms: "Six million hectares which have already been decreed upon still have to be handed over to the *ejidatarios*". Five million hectares of federal lands "are still occupied by *nacionaleros* who do not have the legal possession nor the right to the lands occupied". "In the lands occupied by 'colonies', 4.5 million hectares have still to be investigated". With regard to *ejidos* and communities, "it has been calculated that the right to use 19 million hectares has not yet been legalized". In effect, said the President "60 years after the initiation of agrarian reform, 56% of the surface area of national territory still has to be regularized. There is also an enormous backlog of judicial decisions waiting to be enforced: 1,400 presidential resolutions regarding land appropriations which have not been put into effect; 8,650 unresolved *amparos*; 31,900 applications for amplification or creation of new *ejidal* centres involving 1.5 million land applications; and 12,400 expropriation claims of *ejido* lands".

This goaded the authorities into a committment to clear up the agrarian backlog by 1982, at the latest. There are doubts about the feasibility of this, not so much because of administrative problems,

but because of the practical impossibility of solving many of the pending problems under current legislation. Whether or not this backlog is cleared up, however, nobody seems very confident that this will provide the "solution" to the nation's agrarian problems.

DID THE ANARCHIST-LIBERAL REFORM WITHER AWAY?

At the beginning of this chapter, the dialectics of the two opposing forces which characterized the agrarian picture of the XIX century, were described. On the one hand was the force of the *campesinos*, based on their traditional communities, and on the other that of the colonial powers which gradually took on the capitalist guise of domination. In the second half of the XIX century, the *campesino* drive towards community organization seemed to loose ground and almost disappeared under the liberal regime. This, instead of leading to the Small Producers Republic, led to a capitalist system of land concentration which rapidly deprived the *campesinos* of their rights to the land.

The 1910 revolutionary upheaval was an attempt at reestablishing the drive towards community organization. The idea was to revive the *ejido* and to reclaim communal title deeds recognized by the Spanish Crown, but not by the liberal regime. These attempts tended to become anarchist in nature. This was not only because anarchist points of view were prevalent among the precursors of the Revolution, but also because of the real, historical tendency of the *campesino* movement, whose aspirations seemed to be concentrated on and formulated at a strictly local level.

The Revolution also brought up the possibility of *campesinos* taking over liberal forms of rural organization of production for individual or family modes of land use of the *ejidos* or of the private land holdings, according to the economic and political trends momentarily prevailing.

There were thus two forces and two ways of interpretation of the world operating at the same time, which converged or diverged under differing circumstances.

When examining these questions, it is important to remember that in December 1914, for a whole month, the two largest *campesino* armies of Villa and Zapata occupied Mexico City and became the dominant fraction of the revolutionary movement. "But the *campesinos*, who at the crest of the revolutionary wave, had conquered the capital of the country, did not know what to do with it. They wanted the land, and while they could redistribute it by force of arms, what they now needed, in order to assure legal possession of it, was a government which would sanction the redistribution. But the *campesinos* did not have a programme, or a political party, or even the people to form a

government. They were unable to constitute the dominant class". They had occupied the capital city, but "as they could not do anything useful with it, and in fact the city represented a danger to their cohesion and strength, they left it, to continue their fight in the rural areas".[1] It was the beginning of their downfall, which ended with Villa's military defeat at the hands of Obregon, the killing of Zapata and the gradual extinction of the *campesino* war.

The *campesinos* were unable to take over power after their triumphant revolution, even though they had had the leading role in it. However their very existence and their capacity for creating large social movements, marked decisively and permanently the modern Mexican State. The statement that Mexico's was the first social revolution of the century and not the last of the bourgeois movements is not just a facile expression. It involved all the potential and all the limitations of the country's evolution at the time. It was the first chronologically, but it happened at a less than favourable economic and geo-political time. Slow progress on a zig-zagging path toward achieving its goals seems the price it paid for its prematurity.

Those who took over power lacked strength, as the dominant structure. the land-owning oligarchy had been disbanded by the Revolution, but was always at the ready to fight for its privileges by allying itself with whatever groups were rising to power. In order to block these efforts, the government needed to find popular support among rural and urban workers. As society advanced along the pathways of a capitalist economy, new classes and new power groups were born. Economic automatism, and the penetration of foreign capital encouraged both, State and federal power along lines leading away from the national and social objectives which had been the very reason for its constitutional existence. Social movements and nationalistic attitudes of large groups, for their part, led them to confrontations with the economic and political centres of society's dominating powers, on both national and international levels. The margin for manouvering in this situation was very limited: like a narrow precipitous path. The limits could not be overstepped without serious consequences. To do so would mean jeopardizing the global stability of Mexican society. Neither faction was able totally to impose its domination over the other, even though one progressively accumulated privileges and the other, resentment for its misery and oppression.

In this way, the Mexican State, whose federal power has been and still is, the basis for private enterprise development, has been constantly forced to establish social or nationalistic goals in the face of opposition by dominant economic and political interests. Yet it has been unable to stop the growing imbalance in the redistribu-

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[1] Adolfo Gilly, "La Revolución Mexicana: ruptura y continuidad", in INVESTIGACION ECONOMICA, Vol. XXXVI, No. 4, October-December, 1977, p. 172

tion of the social product.

As far as agrarian reform goes, this kind of evolution as reflected through the different phases described in this chapter, has tended, in spite of fluctuations, to show a predominantly liberal conception of the economy and of politics, a tendency which now seems to have led us to a dead end. The framework for agrarian reform adopted in the last century, has tended to reflect the historical capitalist model followed by the industrially advanced nations: it tried to create the conditions necessary for bringing together family and individual concerns, where "the best", the "most dilligent" were capable of contributing to a modern agricultural organization under "reasonably" equalitarian terms. This model was to a certain extent adopted by the *campesinos* as their own objective during this century. In spite of the social character of the struggle for the land and of the strength of the *campesinos'* communal organizations, their inner dynamics and outside pressures tended to focus their efforts towards individual usufruct of the land, whatever tenure system they came under.

Nevertheless, the progressive fusing of individual land exploitation became impossible. Since the agrarian redistribution was never completed,the expansion in classical terms of the "best" at the cost of the rest, was here exemplified by the restoration of the *latifundio*, against which the fight still continued. Both sectors, those who still did not have access to the land, an increasing number in spite of continuous redistribution, and those who were about to lose it because of the rising economic forces, efficiently blockade any attempt at giving the tenure regime a legal structure in keeping with the logic of the economic concentration of this process. Capitalist expansion, consequently, had to adopt an illegal form of development, linked to that of the *cacique* power structure. "Managerial *neolatifundio*" was the result. This constituted the "natural" product of the liberal model which was systematically encouraged everywhere. It also had to adopt commercial, industrial or financial ways of functioning. With the exception of cattle raising exploitations, where the vagueness of the law afforded legal protection for those who in fact were outlaws invading *ejidal* or communal lands, the "managerial *neolatifundio*" did not, in general, have legal access to the tenure of the land. Even so, their development constituted an authentic disruption of the legal order and provided a constant source of instability and conflict. Their existence meant the total negation of the driving force behind the Mexican Revolution since they could only survive and expand through authoritarian practices and in a climate of endless violence.

Under these conditions, a collective, democratic organization of land exploitation became a part of deep historical currents on taking up again the oldest and most valid of *campesinos* goals. It also emerged as the most adequate legal and institutional road to a gradual fusing together of land holdings under a liberal model. It was the only feasible and lasting form of modern productive organization,

with authentic possibilities of development within the constitutional framework. This formula too, however, came to nothing. On the one hand, the very fact that it was an effective substitute for the agglutination of holdings organized by the "managerial *neolatifundio*" meant that it represented a real threat to them. Consequently they fought against it by every means in their power —and they had many. On the other hand, democratic and collective organization of production appeared as the ever present thorn in the side of a capitalist society. By the logic of the system, its development was unacceptable: because of the actual mechanisms of economic functioning, the inevitability of capitalist expansion, and the ideological apparatus and superstructural organization, this collective formula had to be removed like any other foreign body. Although it seemed impossible to totally erradicate, it was feasible to inhibit its development. Furthermore it was also possible to transform it into yet another instrument of domination, through refunctionalizing its operation according to the requirements of the system.

During recent decades, these contradictions have taken on new meaning. Under the logic of modern capitalist agricultural operations, land ownership or usufruct of the land, looses importance when compared with control of resources. For a long time now, capitalist agricultural development has not been seen as an expansion process arising from agricultural and cattle raising exploitation. This has been reduced to a mere link in the urban agroindustrial structure, within the framework of the concentration processes and the internationalization of capital. In this new context, where capital is more interested in control of rather than possession or occupation of the land, the agrarian reform has to be rapidly terminated in order to stabilize and widen its activity without the risks and uncertainties associated with the conflicts of a never-ending and unstable process. But this movement also means denying agrarian reform, because this very "termination" implies not getting at the ultimate implications of the original historical driving force of the process. Its real purpose is taking away from the *campesinos* any possibility of control over productive resources. In this way, capital has freer control over it, regardless of the tenure system and the modalities this may eventually adopt. These contradictions are reproduced in different terms among the *campesinos*. The process for them means obtaining "all the land and soon" as Narciso Bassols used to say in the '30s. At the same time, they have to deny agrarian reform, that is, retread much of the path with the knowledge that the original anarchist-liberal process has lead them to a dead-end and that possession of the land is not a guarantee of effective control over it. Taking over the land means, today, assuring a material basis for a liberation process, one which goes beyond historical claims formulated, to a large extent, as a return to the communal structures of the past. What is necessary today, on the contrary, is to leave behind the anarchist principle in order to induce present communities to participate effectively in a future of coalitions and solidarity whereby land really can signify freedom.

Within this set of contradictions, there is no clear way out of the impasse at which Mexico's agrarian situation finds itself at the beginning of the 1980s. Furthermore, it cannot be divorced from the profound crisis of rural conditions in the country. There is no agreement between social classes nor is there social agreement which can, in similar terms, define the meaning of either termination or negation of the agrarian reform. But the matter tends to be aired at a superstructural level, in increasingly ideological and sterile terms. There is no scarcity of propositions which try turning back the clock of history and suggest initiating the now classical process of the progressive fusing together of individual exploitations. They propose to "liberate" the *ejidatarios* and *comuneros* from their ties and allow them to rent legally or mortgage their land holdings; thus, together with the lands of the small property owners; an area of disposable land would be formed, which the most "able" would bring together as efficient economic units. As this would demand constitutional changes, which are difficult to envisage in the near future, differing formulae have been suggested which would allow the process to advance, even if only in a transitory way. In this way, the illusions of a Republic of Small Producers is reinforced. A Republic in which, according to the liberals of the last century, the *campesino* would be able to escape from his imprisonment on a plot of land to the freedom of a wage. Other groups, with well-founded mistrust of these *haciendas* without *hacendados*, insist on efforts towards compulsive collectivization. They have not been able to perceive that this, as the '70s experience clearly proved, placed producers within the logic of the system, but disguised as a self-managing and democratic form. This form covers up a structure as unfair as it is inefficient. As was already pointed out, the collective regime in the *ejido* and in the communities or the cooperatives of small producers is inevitably transformed, when promoted from above and from without, into a mechanism which gives power but not responsibility to the technical organisms —public or private— and responsibility without power to the *campesinos*. Whatever the true or imagined subtleties, the fact is that these formulae are swamped in unresolvable contradictions and vicious circles. They are unable to offer real and concrete answers to present agrarian questions without radically tearing apart the very conception and interests which gave rise to them. However, while the *campesinos* suffer from the steady deterioration of their living and productive conditions, they have been rebuilding their organizations on local and regional levels and are making serious efforts to be heard on a national level. Both factory workers and *campesinos* are re-examining certain aspects of their 1930s coalition, the breaking down of which conditioned the posterior evolution of events. Together with other elements, this has brought about a modification in the correlation of political forces, under somewhat less adverse conditions for the *campesinos*. In the short run, this has sharpened tensions and local and regional conflicts, intensified by the critical circumstances. It has also heightened the tendency to look for violent solutions. At the same time, nevertheless, the conditions for a new political solution to the problem have been created. This has come

about through the development of the process which gives coherence and organic form, on a national level, to the *campesino* claims. This process is already pointing, with increasing clarity, towards projects which propose overcoming, once and for all, the anarchist-liberal ideas the *campesinos* shared during the first decades of the century. As will be seen in the last chapter of this book, projects intended as the final phase of the agrarian reform are being drawn up. These may well produce a global synthesis of the long historical road already taken, while paving the way for a more feasible better future.

CHAPTER THREE
MEXICO: BIRTH PLACE AND BURIAL GROUND OF THE GREEN REVOLUTION

Certain spectacular achievements in Mexican agriculture during the nineteen fifties, aroused the attention of the international community for some time. The "Mexican agricultural miracle" was spoken of, and the experiment began to be used as an example in many other countries. Later, the phenomenon spread, and when the same exceptional results were obtained in other regions of the world, it merited a special title: The Green Revolution.

As time went by, the optimistic tone of the first commentaries became somewhat modified. The subject was no longer the centre of discussions on rural development in backward countries and it disappeared from the front pages of newspapers. After some time, when it came up again, it was under awkward conditions: on the defendant's stand. Today it is a subject of intense controversy.

It would be impossible to describe the present state of rural Mexico without reference to these facts. For better or for worse, the phenomenon known as the "Green Revolution" corresponds to deep transformations in the Mexican rural world and is an essential background material for the present situation.

AN UNEXPECTED MOVE FOREWARD

The Mexican agricultural achievements between 1950 and 1970 were truly spectacular. They can be summarized as follows:

Corn. Production increased more than 250 per cent, average yields grew from 300 to 1,300 kg. per hectare.

Wheat. Production grew from 300,000 tons to 2.6 million, that is an eightfold increase; yield per hectare multiplied by four from

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750 to 3,200 kg.

Beans. Production went from 530,000 tons to 925,000.

Sorghum. Production increased 14 times, from 200,000 tons to 2.7 million tons.

Soy bean. From an insignificant level, production rose to 250,000 tons (today it amounts to several million).

Few countries, in fact, have been able to match a sustained growth of 7% in agricultural production, as was the case of Mexico during the 1950s. It was, to all extents and purposes, an authentic agricultural revolution.

A few years ago, Edwin J. Wellhausen, one of the most prominent participants in the experiment, pointed out that the progress of the Green Revolution "was achieved, to a great extent, through a combination of three technological factors: 1) the development of new varieties of plants of high yield, ample adaptability, sensitivity to fertilizers and resistance to diseases; 2) the development of improved "packages" of agricultural practice that included better use of the soil, adequate fertilization and more effective control of weeds and insects, all of which enabled the improved varieties to reach fully their high yield potential; 3) a favourable relationship between the cost of fertilizers and other investments with respect to the price the producer obtained for his produce".[1] To what degree was the revolution in effect due to technological advances? What was the relative importance of the elements involved? What are the economic and social consequences of this kind of progress?

Researchers and Institutions all over the world have recently been asking themselves these questions. This international debate encouraged the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) to sponsor extensive and profound research into the matter, to provide an answer to some of these questions. A substantial portion of the study and its report referred to Mexico.[2] A great deal of specialized literature on the subject has been produced, although the discussion has now cooled off. Advocates of the idea are not as enthusiastic as during the first years, and the critics have let up on their initial virulence. Things have returned to normal.

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[1] Edwin J. Wellhausen, "La agricultura en México, in CIENCIA Y DESARROLLO, Vol. I, No. 13, March-April 1977, p. 40

[2] Cynthia Hewitt de Alcántara, LA MODERNIZACION DE LA AGRICULTURA MEXICANA, 1940-1970. Siglo XXI Editores, México, 1978, and Global II project on social and economic implications of the introduction of new varieties of foodgrains, Geneve UNDP/UNRISD, 1974.

All of this suggests it would be wiser not to deal here with an evaluation of the phenomenon. But some of the basic reports on this experiment, which have already left deep marks on rural Mexico have to be included. It is particularly important to find answers to the question of whether the present crisis can be understood as a necessary consequence of that experiment. Or whether, as Wellhausen puts it, what Mexico now needs is simply a new agricultural revolution, having successfully completed the first one.

DETAILS OF THIS ACHIEVEMENT

In 1941, in the middle of World War II, the Rockefeller Foundation in the U.S., along with the U.S. Government, showed great interest in fostering advanced technical agricultural development in Mexico. General Manuel Avila Camacho's government, for its part, was subjected to intense pressure over agricultural development because, among other things, of a growing shortage of food supplies.

In 1943, an agreement between the Mexican Government and the Rockefeller Foundation was signed. This agreement resulted in the creation of an *Oficina de Estudios Especiales* within the *Secretaría de Agricultura*. It was semiautonomous, financed mainly by the Rockefeller Foundation and exclusively responsible for hiring its own scientific personnel. The programme had the double objective of pursuing scientific and technological improvements in the production of basic foodstuffs and training young Mexicans in research work. The first of these specific objectives gave priority to "improvements in the utilization of the soil; introduction, selection or cultivation of better adapted, high yield and quality varieties of plants; to the most efficient methods of fighting diseases and plagues; and to the introduction of the best quality breeds of domestic animals and fowls". Research also gave priority to the maximization of yields per unit of land cultivated, and to the monetary income of farmers. The programme as a whole was aimed at fostering the development of Mexican agriculture, in order to ensure an adequate supply of foodstuffs to the cities.

With the passing of time, the contents and objectives of the project have come to be considered as having only a technological orientation. It is essential, however, to bear in mind other elements which have been blurred over the years.

The initiative of the Rockefeller Foundation resulted from Vice-president Henry Wallace's active intervention and he in turn had been convinced by Josephus Daniels, U.S. Ambassador to Mexico, when both attended Manuel Avila Camacho's inaugural ceremony. It was not an isolated issue linked to technological preoccupations or the production of foodstuffs, but can be traced to the elaboration of one of the best studies made on the situation of rural Mexico. The pro-

ject was completed under the direction of Nathan L. Whetten who, in the preface to his book, commented on the general context within which the analysis had taken place: "I had the opportunity of undertaking wide study (on Mexico) in 1942, when I was elected by the State Department and the Foreign Agricultural Relations Office of the United States, as one of three rural sociologists to study and report on social conditions and agricultural development in Latin America. This book is the outcome of that experience. Between 1942 and 1945, I worked as a rural sociologist attached to the U.S. Embassy in Mexico, and in this capacity had the opportunity to travel all over the country, visiting all the States of the Republic and interviewing people of all classes and social conditions... Today, it is particularly important that the United States and Mexico understand each other. Mexico is the gateway to Latin America and her relations with the United States are carefully observed by the rest of the Latin American countries."[3]

The research programme financed by the Rockefeller Foundation was thus clearly in keeping with the context of Mexico-U.S. relations. And within this context, the problem of land tenure constituted the central issue.

In 1910, foreigners held a quarter of the national territory: around 50 million hectares. Twenty years later, during which a U.S. invasion of Mexico had taken place and countless diplomatic difficulties had arisen, 32 million hectares were still in the hands of foreigners, that is to say, one fifth of all private estates and one sixth of the total area of the Republic. More than half this amount belonged to U.S. citizens and was concentrated in the northern states, the north Pacific and Gulf regions. The redistribution of land between 1910 and 1940 took place mainly in the central states, thus severely affecting those of Spanish descent whose properties were located in that area, but left the greater part of the North American properties untouched.

Substantial divergences, relating to the conception of private property, were at the root of the well-known 1920s controversy between the U.S. and Mexican Governments. "My Government", said the U.S. Secretary of State to the Mexican Foreign Relations Secretary in 1926, "cannot agree with the fundamental concept that the Mexican Government evidently maintains... of a right granted only for the use of property and to enjoy the usufruct thereof, but which can be suspended or denied by regulations affecting the future duration of that right, or impose conditions on the future possibility of possessing the property". For North Americans, the Mexican doctrine attacked "the roots of private ownership rights, which are the basis for all civilized societies".[4] Beyond doctrinaire or historic as-

[3] Nathan L. Whetten, "México Rural", in PROBLEMAS AGRICOLAS E INDUSTRIALES DE MEXICO, Vol. V, No. 2, México, 1953, p. 13

[4] Note from the U.S. Secretary of State to the Mexican Foreign Relations Secretary, July 31st, 1926. PRESS BULLETIN, State Department, November 23th, 1926, p. 2.

pects, the North American attitude was influenced by the fact that their country was an exporter of capital, in full commercial expansion: they wanted to protect U.S. citizens risking their capital in foreign countries. "If all our investments abroad were to change from the status of property duly acquired, with guarantees of permanence, to that of temporary concessions, with guarantees requiring renewal from time to time, by means of contracts in whose wording we could not intervene, we would be placed in an unprecedented situation. Our commercial relations, not only with Mexico but with all of Latin America, depend on mutual trust".[5] According to President Coolidge, "the person and property of a citizen are part of the nation's general domain, even though the citizen is in a foreign country".[6] From the Mexican point of view, the matter involved nothing less than asserting the nation's sovereignty over its territory in terms of the 27th Article of the Constitution: "If private ownership rights over portions of national territory are not derived from the aggregate rights of the nation as a whole, then all those nations who open their doors to foreigners will one day witness some of those portions acquired by foreigners becoming subject to foreign laws outside the sovereignty of the nation and that sovereignty being destroyed".[7]

Already at stake was the oil question which would be defined in the following decade. During the 1920s, the solution to the controversy was found through acceptance of the Mexican argument, under the condition that she, in turn, would accept the transformation of simple dominion into perpetual concession. With land owners having to accept the transformation of their title deeds into concessions, the basis was laid for the claim that brought about the 1938 oil expropriation.

North American interest in rural Mexico, shown by Henry Wallace, Josephus Daniels and the Rockefeller Foundation, cannot be understood merely within the limited scope of technical cooperation. Apart from the global context of World War II, and the hemispheric and trade relations between Mexico and the U.S., the main thorn in their relations was the extensive rural properties of U.S. citizens in Mexico, concentrated in the northern states and the north Pacific area.

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[5] Departamento de Comercio, Oficina de Comercio Interior y Exterior, No. 45, PRESS BULLETIN, October 7th, 1918, Circular de la División Latinoamericana. Published in DOCUMENTOS RELATIVOS AL INTENTO DEL GOBIERNO MEXICANO DE CONFISCAR LAS PROPIEDADES PETROLERAS DE LOS EXTRANJEROS, recopilados por la Asociación de Productores de Petróleo de México, February 1919, p. 50

[6] United States Daily, April 26th, 1927, column 2, p. 2

[7] BOLETIN de la Secretaría de Gobernación, "El Artículo 27 de la Constitución Federal, México, September, 1922, p. 2

The research programme of the *Oficina de Estudios Especiales* gave priority to corn and wheat, particularly the latter. Their progress paralleled that of expanding agriculture and cattle raising in the north and northwest regions of the Republic. They were, in fact, self-stimulating processes: the research work contributed genetic material and the cultivation techniques would yield their full potential in the areas where important irrigation works were being constructed. Furthermore, both processes related to a specific type of farmer: the largest, "most linked to trade and best able to obtain fertilizers and make other investments." As Wellhausen points out, "up to 1968, the agricultural revolution in Mexico moved forward under its own steam, without need of any great effort to assist the farmers technically".[8] Actually, the support needed was not so much technological as economic: other mechanisms of strategic importance such as credit and marketing, were added to the results of research and infrastructural works. The "favourable relationship of fertilizer costs and other investments, with respect to the price received by the producer" was not the result of natural market conditions, but the outcome of an explicit decision taken by the authorities, which resorted to increasing subsidies, both to lower the farmers' costs of production and to raise incomes by means of guaranteed prices above those of the market. It was the relatively slow dynamics of the process, and not the limitations of the diffusion system, which were responsible for the delay of more than 15 years in the propagation of experimental results.

Because of its very inertia, the programme concentrated more and more on the irrigated areas of the northwest and began to develop side effects on the spatial distribution of production. The yield increased in areas which could apply the new technology, the humidity requirements of which reduced its application to irrigated areas, so that regions of seasonal production, which traditionally had generated the greatest proportion of wheat produced in the country, began to stop cultivating. In fact, research related to seasonal production was explicitly excluded from the programme and put in the hands of the *Instituto de Investigaciones Agrícolas* created in 1947 by a group of Mexican researchers committed to the principles of agrarianism and concerned with giving a clear social orientation to their work. The idea was to continue the work initiated many years previously.

The efforts of the *Oficina de Estudios Especiales*, on the subject of corn produced important advances as well. Nonetheless, the cost of the production structure limited massive incorporation of new technology to areas of irrigated commercial agriculture, where wheat, cotton, safflower or soy bean offered better economic results.

In the areas with seasonal rains, the lack of humidity and the limited resources of producers prevented the spread of the new technol-

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[8] Wellhausen, OP.CIT., p. 43

ogy. Thus, wheat became the main protagonist during the first years of the Green Revolution.

In 1961, the *Oficina de Estudios Especiales* merged with the *Instituto de Investigaciones Agrícolas* to form the *Instituto Nacional de Investigaciones Agrícolas* (INIA). The Office's regional facilities created in part with the support of the powerful northwestern credit unions, became the patrimony of the INIA. With the new administrative arrangements, the Rockefeller Foundation began to reduce its financial contributions, a gap which was not compensated for by government funds. As a result, during the 1960s, the programme's budget was substantially reduced, notwithstanding an extension in its scope and responsibility for crops and regions.

Following the disappearance of the *Oficina de Estudios Especiales*, the Rockefeller Foundation directed most of its efforts towards the exportation of its scientific achievements, particularly those of genetic material. This was done through the *Centro Internacional de Mejoramiento del Maíz y el Trigo* (CIMMYT). From 1960 onwards, and more specifically since 1968, when the Institute acquired experimental facilities of its own, it began to spread the results, generated by the project, to other Third World countries.

During the sixteen years of the programme's existence, approximately 750 Mexican researchers participating in field work and laboratories, received intensive training. Some of these were later incorporated into the *Secretaría de Agricultura* promotion programmes, and the rest remained assigned to INIA or the graduate programme of the Chapingo Agricultural School.

THE CHICKEN AND THE EGG

As often happens in the field of social sciences, the discussion over the Green Revolution has centred on one interpretation of the consequences and causal connection of phenomena. The sort of evaluation applied depends on the order of factors. The creators and advocators of the Green Revolution violently reject the view that the widening of inequalities is due to the process of technological progress itself. They acknowledge, however, that "not every farmer is benefitted to the same extent by the technological improvements" and that, "as was expected, the new technology seemed to prosper better in those areas where production risks were lower and profit expectations higher." When they observed that the impact of the agricultural revolution came to an end by the late '60s, they believed it might be due to the fact that "there are almost no one left to utilize the technological package under the condition it is now being offered." Their diagnosis led to the suggestion of developing "special technological packages" suited to seasonally cultivated areas, and reorienting the technical assistance programmes,

"in order to bring them to the level of the farmers and see that a higher proportion of the rapidly adapt to this advantageous technology".[9]

What validity has the criticism that associated technological progress with the social effects of the process into which it is inserted? "The work of the scientists has been good", said Andrew Pearse, manager of the UNRISD project for evaluating the Green Revolution; "but it cannot be expected", he warned, "that technological changes in the methods of production be neutral". On the contrary "it is probable that they are as much a dynamic force of social and political change as they are economic". It is necessary to ask, then, about the degree to which technological innovations "contributed to the development of Mexican economy and society".[10]

"Electronic computers are reactionary", exclamed a radical economist in Mexico some years ago. "Not all of them", answered another, equally radical. Under present conditions, discussion around the supposed neutrality of technological progress is useless. It is neutral neither in origin nor in goals or effects. "A chip off the old block" as the popular saying goes. In fact, "it was expected", as Wellhausen stressed, that the benefits of the Green Revolution would be concentrated, and thus increase existing inequalities: the benefits arose from the structure of inequality as its direct and linear expression, not as its negation. The UNRISD study, as well as other projects, have highlighted the adverse social implications of the Green Revolution and questioned its economic contributions. The causal connections have been identified between this technological experience and the subsequent problems in the society involved. But this is not enough. Something besides perception of an error is needed to correct it. It will inevitably be repeated, even though it takes on different forms, as long as its causes are not determined and overcome. In order not to repeat the unwanted effects of the Green Revolution, both under its conventional patterns or under revised forms which have carried it to seasonal rain areas, it is necessary to inquire about the origins of the phenomenon. It is not possible to dissociate the scientific and technological research programme and its results from the development model under which it is operating, from its implicit hypothesis and the social and political context from which it emerged. In order to encompass these aspects, other elements have to be introduced into the analysis.

THE UPS AND DOWNS OF A REACTION

On February 5th, 1938, at twelve o'clock, General Lázaro Cárdenas

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[9] Ibidem.

[10] Cynthia Hewitt, OP. CIT., p. 9

inaugurated the *ejidal* sugar mill "Emiliano Zapata" in Zacatepec. In his notes, General Cárdenas wrote: "a modern mill, planned by the present administration with social purposes to improve the *ejidatarios'* economic conditions... It will be managed under a cooperative system formed by *ejidatarios* and factory workers".[11]

After a few weeks, on March 10th, Lázaro Cárdenas and Francisco J. Mújica returned from a visit to the sugar mill. They stopped at a fruit garden in Palmira and talked for over an hour. There, under a tree which still bears the mark made on it by General Cárdenas, he entrusted to Mújica the task of preparing an address to the nation. On March 18th, General Cárdenas made it public: the oil industry expropriation thus came into effect, despite the defiance of private foreign companies, who had rejected a Supreme Court ruling ordering the fulfillment of the workers' demands. "While fascism was gaining momentum, our country opened the door to the world of the future. And it was done within our legal system and with the backing of workers' organizations. The Constitution blended with a class struggle to give the nation a new historical sense. The social conquests of workers —persecuted in Germany, harassed in Italy, humiliated in Japan— became a national response in Mexico. The expropriation was not only an act of dignity, it was also an opening to the world of tomorrow".[12]

The anecdotal situation which associates the emergence of modern cooperative agroindustry, in the hands of the working people, with the oil expropriation is neither casual nor irrelevant. In 1938, the Cárdenas administration culminated, historically, a double-edged action: the radical rescue of the nation's rights over its territory and the radical allocation of the exercise of those rights to the rightful historical owners. The class alliances which permitted the Cárdenas agrarian reform and the expropriation of the oil industry, found their roots and destiny and historical meaning in this cooperative organization which was capable of excluding exploitation from the relationship between producers. All of this meant placing the country at the threshold of the future, beyond immediate reality.

A reaction to an act of such magnitude was inevitable. The newly opened roads represented a concrete threat to those interests which have historically disputed the Mexican peoples' right to the use of their own territory and the produce of their own efforts. Agrarian reform has always been a rural project (although of the working class too, in its most advanced sense), which the power structure

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[11] Lázaro Cárdenas, OBRAS, No. 1, Apuntes 1913-1940, Nueva Biblioteca Mexicana de la UNAM, No. 28, UNAM. Dirección General de Publicaciones, México, 1972, p. 385.

[12] Gastón García Cantú, "Los idos de marzo", in SIEMPRE, No. 1397, April 2nd, 1980, p. 23.

has always resisted: sometimes blockading it and on other occasions directing it against its original goals. Amid great difficulties, postponed for more than a quarter of a century, the project finally seemed able to hold its course in history in the 1930s. It was losing anarchist and village ballast, characteristic of its formative period, in a colonialized society. Instead it showed strength as a radical promise when the historical claim for the land, combined with social and political organization, openly opposed capital. It was essential for the power structures to come up with their own opposing project while at the same time stripping all anarchist elements from the liberal dream into which they had embarked during the 1920s.

The terms of the global model are widely known. The modernization of the country, planned in the midst of a world war, was naturally linked to the industrialization process. To support the model, it was necessary to intensify capital accumulation in the agricultural sector, which had to perform several functions: supply foodstuffs and raw materials to society as a whole; generate foreign exchange and other resources to finance industrial development in urban areas; contribute with the labour force required in the process and assure the existence of a "surplus" population, i.e. people who could not be easily absorbed in the course of industrialization. Assuming that the rural economy would be incapable of fulfilling the task, enclaves of high productivity needed to be created in rural areas, in charge of a group of "progressive farmers". If the adequate technological innovations were available, the required foodstuffs would be produced in these enclaves, and the rural labour force, inevitably expelled from deteriorated holdings, would be absorbed with support from the industrial and commercial sectors. At the time, possibly no one had given this conceptual form to the model. It was not, and never had been, some sort of maquiavelian confabulation thought up inside or outside the country. It was, in fact, the resultant processes of economic logic, set in concrete political history; its present <u>form</u> is an analytical product and it is irrelevant whether somebody had <u>thought</u> of it or not in terms of this <u>final</u> version, which works necessarily as a description <u>a posteriori</u> of what has already occurred.

The model worked splendidly in its destructive dimension: the rural economy at first, became stagnant, and then showed outright deterioration as dependence on commercial agriculture increased. Today's crisis, the beginnings of which are set by some analysts in 1965, has above all, hit corn producers: the *campesinos*. In its constructive dimension, the results of the model were notable in many aspects: a high growth rate of production; a notorious increase in productivity —which for certain products and at certain periods came to be the highest in the world—; the emergence and development of a select group of prosperous modern farmers... This promising movement seemed to be independent from the negative effects. It was not clear how it drew strength from the same process. This only became clear with the analysis of the model's limits and failures: its inability to produce enough food for the population, to absorb

the labour force expelled from the *campesino* sector and to create authentic rural development, as well as its exact role in the present crisis.

This kind of evolution was in fact, to be expected. The logic of subsidies cannot defeat the logic of the economy. Areas of high productivity, conceived for basic production, were committed to the programme only in the first stages, under artificial conditions of economic and commercial protection and during periods of coinciding social priorities and profit criteria.

When the economy became exposed to the forces of international markets and the logic of economic functioning imposed on commercial producers diverting them from social priorities, these were hopelessly abandoned. The leader of the northwestern vegetable producers sees it clearly in these terms: why, he has asked, should farmers give up a profit of one hundred thousand pesos per hectare with the production of tomatoes, in order to turn to the cultivation of corn yielding a profit of only ten thousand pesos? The logic of his behaviour and that of the market coincide. It cannot be any other way.

It is thus a question of who the protagonists of production are. Who, why and under what conditions will the tasks of production be undertaken? What should the goal of the nation's resources be in regard to priority aspects of foodstuffs supply and the fomenting of cattle raising? The definition of a development model and its technological requirements depend on the answer to these questions. In 1940, these questions had a precise answer: it was indispensable to rescue these *hacendados* that had been able to survive thirty years of agrarian process, forget "*ejidal* rhetoric"—as Calles suggested in 1930— and entrust the productive tasks of the agricultural sector to a group of "modern farmers" aided by support mechanisms of the State.

In Nathan L. Whetten's study made for the U.S. State Department, it is pointed out that in 1940, two thirds of the properties of over one thousand hectares in size "were found in regions too dry for non-irrigated crops to prosper without considerable risk." 61 per cent of all properties with an area of over 10,000 hectares were also located in those northern regions.[13] The redistribution of land did not seem reversible, but it was still possible to place the responsibility of production on those rural producers whose land, found in semi-arid zones, had been spared from the effects of the agrarian winds, and thus could be turned into irrigated lands. Most investments between 1940 and 1970, as has already been pointed out, were channelled to these regions. It is interesting to see who received these benefits. "Whereas more than 200,000 of the irrigated hectares opened during the Cárdenas administration were given to rural workers, those entering production after 1940 (approximately

[13] Whetten, OP. CIT., p. 134

1.8 million hectares until 1963), were in general sold as private property to relatives of politicians and important traders...many of whom were already large land owners".[14] During this period, the state of Sinaloa received the lion's share of investments for irrigated lands: 22.2 per cent of the national total. When Whetten critically evaluates the Cárdenas redistribution of land, he mentions the organizing of small gangs of bandits in southern Sinaloa, which killed 600 or 700 *ejidatarios* and as many non-*ejidatarios* over a period of four years. What originated conflicts in this area was the question of whether certain properties were liable to expropriation or not. Large tracts of land had been informally divided by the owners among their descendants. These took possession of their plots without officially having made any change of property in the public records office. Although the descendant claimed to be a small land holder, the government, without any further investigation, merely basing its information on that of the records office, began to open cases of expropriation against the large holdings. The new owner, after having strongly protested, fled to the *sierras* and organized groups to oppose the application of the Reform. It has been said that they took pleasure in killing agrarian leaders whenever the occasion arose. The *ejidatarios* found themselves ploughing the land with a rifle over their shoulder. A *Banco Ejidal* employee was shot in the arm when returning from collecting payments on credits granted to *ejidatarios*. In many places personal security was so precarious that *ejidos* were abandoned, and those who claimed to be the owners, took over the land. Recently, a presidential agreement returned the land of the abandoned *ejidos* to the alleged older owners".[15]

As Wellhausen has correctly stressed, an agricultural "revolution" has come to an end, and Mexico needs to start a new one. The first one had responded to questions formulated in a context dominated by "progressive farmers" and towards whom it was directed. However, according to Wellhausen these no longer exist. There are only a few of them and in fact, fewer and fewer as time goes by. That is the logic of their existence and functioning: the logic of concentration. If a "technological package for seasonally cultivated lands" forms part of the new agricultural "revolution", and is aimed at these farmers, it is possible that they won't be found. To define them, as Wellhausen does, by their location in good seasonally cultivated lands (the area in which the "technological package" can be effective), is an obsolete answer. In any case, the present question would remain; what to do with those *campesinos* that the new revolution would displace or marginalize? In what way could commercial farmers be induced to act according to social prorities, devoting themselves to the production of goods which do not respond to the logic of profits? Is there a *campesino* option to today's rural development? Would the new agricultural revolution have a renewed agrarian component?. Mexico has entered the 1980s right in the middle of the debate around these questions.

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[14] Cynthia Hewitt, OP. CIT., p. 134.

[15] Whetten, OP. CIT., p. 116.

CHAPTER FOUR
THE STATE AND THE RURAL SECTOR: THE STORY OF AN IMPOSSIBLE LOVE

The Agrarian Reform and the Green Revolution were not only different projects; they were in direct opposition to each other. Since the second was capable of refunctionalizing the first and the latter never went too far, some retrospective views of the process tend to suppose that in fact there was only one project, which took different forms under differing circumstances. From this point of view, the protagonists were forced to dance at whatever rhythm the power structures played, always able to turn to profit everything they touched. An interpretation of the facts, however, discovers in Agrarian Reform a deeply rooted driving force of great historical content, coming from the *campesino*, but incapable of imposing itself upon all other social forces. Thus any progress the project makes appears as a necessary concession on the part of the power structures in answer to the strength of rural pressure; the setbacks and deformations —which have gone so far as to deny land redistribu_ tion—, would be manifestations of the weaknesses and deficiencies of this drive.

What part have the Mexican State and Federal power played in this process? How could the same State, without any significant structural changes and under conditions of exceptional stability within the Latin American context, undertake simultaneously or successively projects leading in opposing directions?

A STORMY ROMANCE

On September 24th 1913, in a famous speech delivered in Hermosillo, Sonora, the leader of the Constitutionalist Army, Venustiano Carranza, the father of the Constitution, stated: "The Mexican people must understand that once the armed struggle is over... the formidable, majestic social struggle, the class struggle, must begin". Four

years later, when the *Pacto Constitucional* was signed, Mexican society felt that it would be politically able to handle its class conflicts. Soon, however, it was seen that this was not to be the case, as Carranza's violent death proved.

On January 6th 1915, Venustiano Caranza tried to take away the Zapatistas' banner with a radical agrarian law. The concessional character of that decree could not have been clearer. The intellectual author, Luis Cabrera, noted as early as 1912: "The rural population needs to complement its wage. If they had *ejidos*, they would devote their energies to impoverishing them for half ot the year on their own account. Without them, they are forced to live for six months off their daily-wage and the other six to take up their rifles as Zapatistas". The decree (among other of its limitations) demanded that village prove their need for land as well as their previous right to them, while, at the same time, it gave *hacendados* the chance to oppose agrarian action by resorting to court action.

Carranza seemed conscious of the correlation of forces around him. On one side were the large Mexican and foreign interests, involved mainly with the *haciendas*, oil production and mining, while on the other side were the vigorous *campesino* armies. In 1914, he organized a convention to outline, in conciliatory terms, the programme for a new government. The conference, however, quickly became radicalized: the combined pressures of Zapatistas and Villistas imposed a programme which demanded the immediate return of *ejidos* to the villages and the break of *latifundios*.

Although the convention did not recognize his authority because of his views of agrarian matters, Carranza took advantage of the conventionists' incapacity to structure and maintain political power, and regained control of the movement. In his *Plan de Veracruz*, he announced, among other things, his decision to pass agrarian laws "to favour the formation of small holdings, by dissolving *latifundios* and restoring to the villages the land which had unjustly been taken away from them". This policy of concessions and equilibrium, together with Obregon's military actions which defeated Villa, enabled Carranza to increase his control over the country. However, to ensure control would not be lost again, and in answer to pressure from all sides, and possibly because he was also concerned about the social reforms being put into practice by some of the leaders of the movement, Carranza convoked a Congress whose main task would be the drafting of a new Constitution.

But the draft of the Constitution was negotiated in the midst of revolutionary effervescence, under the shadow of the real economic powers —whose influence remained almost untouched— and in the very short period of two months. So again it was presented in concessionary terms. The Constitution basically brought together the *Programa de Reformas Sociales* which had been formulated by the great *campesino* armies of Villa and Zapata. However, neither the Constitution nor the government which resulted from it, presided over by

Carranza, could satisfy the *campesinos'* concrete claims. Neither in form nor in essence did it fit into the real world.

"Zapatism did not question the State nor did it propose any kind of alternative. Through its rejection of all bourgeois factions and in its desire for total autonomy, it placed itself outside the State. Its form of organization did not derive from the latter but from other roots. And if those who are outside the State decide to take up arms, they automatically place themselves against the State".[1]

In fact, the constitutionalist regime found a many faceted and insurmountable challenge in the Zapatist movement: government was impossible without it or against it. And it could not govern with it unless it denied itself. Zapatism, furthermore, was quite decided on doing without the State. The movement not only had a programme but also an autonomous organization: that of the villages. In the course of the Revolution, it had found "an organizational form independent from the State and its political fractions, peculiar to the *campesinos*, anchored in their own tradition, open to alliance with the industrial working class (even though this may never actually take place)".[2] Negotiations were impossible. The State, in the process of defining itself through the Constitution, could not accept at its core a force of such dimensions which was trying to remove itself from the State's orbit, even though it was not attempting to substitute it. And it was impossible to channel this contradiction through a political process, because the Zapatist's demands could not be reduced to the *Pacto Constitucional*. It was tearing apart —unknowngly perhaps— the framework of the relations of production within which it was constructed. It was necessary, again, to resort to force. On April 10, 1919, Zapata was assassinated in Chinameca. Nevertheless: Al caer Zapata
en acción desleal,
mataron a un hombre
pero no a su ideal. *

Zapatism, in effect, did not die with Zapata, and the governing group trying to build up federal power after the Revolution, remained opposed to Zapatism. The arduous search for stability led them, time and again, to make concessions to all other groups, without ever assuming the rural project as their own. As the centralized structure of federal power continued, on a national level, the solution to the land question on a local level was defined not by poli-

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[1] Adolfo Gilly, "La guerra de clases en la Revolución Mexicana", in INTERPRETACIONES DE LA REVOLUCION MEXICANA, UNAM - Nueva Imagen, México, 1979, p. 23.

[2] OP. CIT., p. 33.

* (Translator's note) When Zapata fell // in a disloyal act // a man was killed // but not his ideal.

tics but by force. Violence continued, while men from the state of Sonora —fundamentally opposed to Zapatism—, began a progressive consolidation of the sort of economic and social structures which could support the exercise of power at national levels. By the end of the decade, it seemed as though the time had arrived to give political expression to the domination scheme through the creation of the *Partido Nacional Revolucionario*. This wise creation initiated the Mexican State's "policy of the masses" which would place it irrevocably in a modern context. In this way, the State was able not only to bring together the different factions involved and give organic national direction to those local and regional powers which still remained, but was also able to create adequate conditions for promoting social awareness. This tends to operate as a condition for the effective functioning of modern capitalist societies.

The political definition of the new context obliged President Calles, from Sonora, to finally recognize agrarianism. The illusion of the *campesino* community had to be done away with in order to enter openly into the conventional transformation of capitalist production in agriculture. It was a somewhat precipitous decision, however. Zapatism had become a concrete material force, capable of exerting effective pressure on the political system, in spite of its ideological confusions, its lack of organic articulation and the constant division amongst its leaders and *caudillos*. It was impossible to eliminate Zapatism in one stroke, much less cancel people's expectations altogether since these had been maintained by partial concessions granted from time to time to *campesinos* throughout the Republic. The dormant restlessness of the rural population, was abruptly awakened by actions such as that of Calles. They were on the move again.

At the beginning of the 1930s, a double force rose against the landed bourgeosie which, during the previous decade, had achieved important growth. The first was a new rural movement which grouped together Calles' anti-agrarian policies. The second grouped together the forces of the industrial and commercial structures of economic power, advancing at the pace of capitalist expansion. The effects of the Great Depression and the commotion prior to World War II, were also being felt throughout the country. Within this context, the workers were beginning to make their presence felt through organizations which they had been forming. The power conflicts which were still alive between different political groups were reactivated and the country trembled to its foundations. In order to direct such diversity of contradictions in political terms, the Cardenist administration adopted a radical framework for action. This included the *Plan Sexenal* of 1934, as well as launching an open and consistant policy of the masses, which turned popular mobilization into the key of transforming government action.

The process through which the *Confederación Nacional Campesina* came into being has already been mentioned. Between 1935 and 1938 the Zapatista flag continued to fly at regional levels. The accelerated redistribution of land, the attempt to create collective organiza-

tions, and the capacity once more to oppose land owners' aggressions with the force of arms —supplied by the government—, together with many other factors, stimulated the *campesinos'* political participation, which seemed to be of a much higher standard than during the Revolutionary uprising. In Zapatism there existed the germ for the development of the *campesino*-worker alliance embodied in the figure of the *campesino*-proletariat working in the sugar fields and modern sugar mills of Morelos".[3] The creation of the Emiliano Zapata cooperative sugar mill, on February 10, 1938, culminated this period and symbolically took up once more the historic line of this alliance. It had ceased to be a germinative element and had become a concrete possibility even though it was not, as yet, a tangible reality.

All this was too much. And too soon. Internal and external pressures radically changed the possibilities and the direction of events. The Cardenist administration strengthened —within the constitutional framework and because of the dynamics of forces outside its control— the economic structures capable of blockading the political option it had itself opened through a popular mobilization. These forces were willing to stop short, before it was too late; they had already managed to do so during the first ten years of revolutionary actions, when a military foreign intervention was only a symptomatic of that decision and of the power behind it. Now, the same international conditions which had previously reduced the risks of an oil expropriation or the creation of a worker-*campesino* organizations and federal power, which had played a strategic role in the mobilization and organization of the workers, were now operating as a restraint. The internal dynamics of these organizations, which had been encouraged and reactivated by Cardenist fire, were unable to express themselves fluently in a context which conspired to extinguish or repress them. Federal power could not and did not want to deny the nature of the State system merely in order to follow the impulse of an impetuous popular trend which it had itself promoted as a survival weapon but that now tended to destroy it.

The military turbulence of the first decade of the Mexican Revolution, was followed by twenty years of political turmoil. The social content of the 1917 Constitution was defined as a result of this turmoil. The worker-*campesino* project which had emerged in embryonic form during the revolutionary upheaval and had taken on new life in the following years, was not adopted by the State since the dominating structure denied the very essence of the project. At first the federal power of the State had accomodated different revolutionary factions. These were still trying in the 1920s to free themselves from control. Their contradictions disarmed the State and blocked the construction of a truly national project: the creation of a State party. In the 1930s, federal power had been invigourated by the very dynamism of the social forces which had originally given

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[3] Ibidem.

strength to the Revolution. However, when these forces gained momentum, and wanted to go further, federal power found itself tied to forces opposing the project. In the face of the increasingly insistent and specific demands of the latter, it became necessary to subordinate the former, i.e. it became necessary to open up possibilities for those forces which were in keeping with the established social order, for those forces able to develop within the State. At the same time all opposing forces had to be removed from the heart of federal power. Above all, Zapatism had to be extinguished, especially since it was now adding to the strength of its historic significance, a realization of its potential as a modern social movement, as it savoured the sweetness of its alliance with other social classes. It was necessary to exclude the *campesinos* from the project: they had no place in it. Now, the question was not one of getting rid of a burden from the past, but one of preventing an option that was beginning to appear for the future. For the next forty years, the Mexican State through the strength of its federal power dedicated itself to precisely that task. This was done by careful dismembering of the alliances that had been framed during the previous period and encouraging the formation of others more in line with State projects.

In 1935, Ramón Beteta voiced an attitude generalized among Cardenists by suggesting that Mexico was capable of creating her own destiny: "By observing the effects of the capitalist world's last crisis, we believe that we can reap the benefits of the industrial age without having to suffer the negative consequences... We have dreamed of a Mexico made up of *ejidos* and small industrial communities, with electric power, health institutions, where goods are produced to satisfy the population's needs, where machinery is employed to alleviate men from hard labour, and not for so-called overproduction". A few years later, Ramón Beteta became one of the main designers of a radically different model.

The situation was very unsettled. The same Cardenist drive intensified pressure for rapid industrialization. The World War opened extraordinary opportunities for industrial entrepreneurs, especially among the younger generation who found no difficulty in combining its interests with those of their more traditional colleagues. A decrease in the provision of industrial products because of the war was pushing in the same direction. The land owners seemed relieved that the emphasis of the development model was no longer put on agrarian transformation. They knew they could link their enterprises to the new industrial structure. The workers, for their part, could not but observe with interest the prospect of consistent increases in the number of jobs. The *campesinos* were the only group who did not have a place at the banquet of the industrial revolution. When President Avila Camacho was sworn in, he announced a new project and warned that in order for it to be put into practice, the country would rely mostly on "the vital energy of private enterprise". The agricultural sector did not form part of this promised destiny. Its task was to create the "basis for achieving industrial great-

ness"; in order to do that "protection for agricultural private property would be increased, not only to defend those already existing, but also to form new private properties in vast uncultivated regions".

A MARRIAGE OF CONVENIENCE

Excluding the *campesinos* does not mean doing without them. They had a strategic role to play in the project, subjecting their demands to it, but with no possibility of enjoying any benefits. Their only hope was of later joining the project, when they ceased to be what they were.

The model of industrial urban development adopted in Mexico during the last decades, fell within the context of delayed capitalism subordinated to that of the United States. This model assigned three specific functions to agricultural and cattle raising activities:

— The provision of foodstuffs and raw materials at low and stable prices for the internal market in order to facilitate urban wage control.[4]

[4] The wages question implies a serious contradiction in the application of the model. On the one hand, it is essential to keep them low and stable to propitiate capital accumulation in the industrial sector which is the key to the model. On the other hand, the new class alliance on which it is based, finds a fundamental component among the "organized" workers. This contradiction has demanded since the 1940s, special efforts producing very uneven results. Up until 1970, it was possible to grant real income improvements to the most advanced sectors of the working class, even though their share of the social product decreased, while the share of other workers, the *campesinos* and the ever-increasing number of marginal population in the cities was considerably reduced. In order to make this pattern of evolution possible, the State proceded first to break up the alliance established in the 1930s between the worker and *campesinos* organizations. After that, the links and mechanisms of ideological and political control of federal power were strengthened over those worker organizations that could become part of the impious alliance. The efforts of the independent unions movement were thus obstructed or repressed in their search for support from the rising middle classes, into which the workers of the organized sector, were rapidly being incorporated. The massive repression of a long range independent worker movement, which in 1958 posed a serious threat to the global model, was as unorganized as it was violent. During the seventies, in view of the exhaustion of the model, it became necessary to resort to external borrowing and to deficit financing of public expenditure to meet the increasing demands of conflicting groups. The political concessions granted during the first years of the decade, had been more rhetorical than real but effective in many ways. However, they led to the 1976 crisis, after which the deterioration of incomes extended also to those who, until then, had enjoyed constant improvements, thus bringing them

- The generation of foreign currency through a favourable agricultural balance of trade, and the contribution of resources, through commercial, financial and fiscal transfers, in order to support the process of industrial accumulation and the financing of development.

- The partial covering of the cost of reproducing the labour force required in rural areas of high productivity or in urban services, as well as the supply of a labour force in permanent demand by industrial and commercial development in the cities.

At the beginning of the 1940s, the first of these functions was of decisive importance. The increasing food deficit and the high rate of inflation caused severe upheavals. Though imports were available to meet the most immediate demands, the root of the problem had to be attacked. The problem was not the stagnation of agricultural and livestock activities, whose yearly production rate grew at more than five per cent between 1935 and 1942. The problem arose from the fast growth in urban demand, which in turn was related to industrialization and to rural produce (being withheld as a result of the change in the distribution) as well as to the voracious appropriation of surplus generated in the agricultural sector in accordance with the new model. The task was entrusted, basically, to the progressive farmers of the north, i.e. to large capitalist enterprise enclaves. As has been previously indicated, the technology of the Green Revolution was only one component of the promotion programmes, which were based on irrigation projects.

Only seven per cent of all arable land in Mexico can produce satisfactory results without irrigation under existing technology. That is why hydraulic works have always played a strategic role in agricultural development, even in Aztec times. At the turn of the century it was estimated that only 70,000 hectares were under irrigation and even these used relatively small and scattered systems. The 1917 Constitution placed great responsibility for this task on the revolutionary governments, in terms of the 27th Article of the Constitution. In 1921, the *Dirección de Irrigación* was created for that purpose, and in 1924 it became the *Departamento de Reglamentación e Irrigación*. Two years later, as part of a policy designed to support medium-sized private farmers, Calles founded the *Comisión Nacional de Irrigación*, which had appropriations amounting to 4.4 per cent

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down to the 1940 level. In the struggle that developed during the 1970s over, among other things, the use of oil revenues, the set of alliances backing the model are being rearranged.
For an analysis of this process during the last decade, see Carlos Tello, LA POLITICA ECONOMICA EN MEXICO, Siglo XXI Editores, México, 1979, and "La disputa por la Nación", in NEXOS, No. 24, December 1979, as well as David Barkin and Gustavo Esteva, INFLACION Y DEMOCRACIA: EL CASO DE MEXICO, Siglo XXI Editores, México, 1979.

of the federal budget for two years. During the Cardenist administration, this amount grew to 7.8 per cent for the construction of 200,000 irrigated hectares and the rehabilitation of a similar number of hectares which were given to *ejidatarios* and small private land owners.

The new model promoted irrigation works from 1940 onwards. Between 1941 and 1946 they absorbed 15 per cent of all public investments —a sum equivalent to more than 90% of the total resources allocated to agricultural development. In 1946 the *Secretaría de Recursos Hidráulicos* took the place of the old *Comisión Nacional de Irrigación* and took over this huge task. By 1940 there were 310,000 hectares in the officially irrigated districts. This figure represented one third of all irrigated land. Ten years later, public works had expanded to an area of 859,000 hectares, almost half the national total. These figures showed a twofold increase by 1960, and reached, in the '70s the sum of 3 million hectares in the officially irrigated districts, and around 5 million including non-public irrigated lands. Whereas in 1940, land irrigated from public investment funds did not reach 5 per cent of the total of land under cultivation, the proportion in the seventies had risen to three quarters of the total.

The distribution of irrigated land followed the concentration pattern indicated by the model. As shown earlier, investments were channelled mainly to the northern and north Pacific States, where Sinaloa, Sonora and Tamaulipas absorbed more than 40 per cent of the investments made between 1941 and 1970. However, at present, less than one per cent of current producers own 20 per cent of the total of irrigated land. Concentration has tended to operate through control mechanisms (such as illegal leasing of plots), rather than through direct ownership.

The privileged areas that in this way were able during the 1950s to satisfy their internal food requirements, found themselves in a favourable position to dedicate part of their efforts to the second function assigned to them, that of the generation of foreign currency through exports. Meanwhile, the *campesino* economy was slowly dying, paying the costs of survival and providing temporary labour for domestic zones and those of the southern United States. Migration to urban areas increased rapidly, surpassing industrial requirements which had originated the so-called phenomenon of marginal populations in the cities.

The model demanded an improved national overland communications system, and as a result the network has grown from 10 thousand km to 200 thousand in the last forty years. In keeping with global conceptions, although not in keeping with the real priorities of Mexican society, the emphasis was placed on road transportation because a substantial increase was expected in the number of motor vehicles (from 150 thousand in 1940 to over 4 million in 1980).

It is also necessary to include in the global perspective, public investment in electrification which showed an extraordinary increase, although only in the last decade has it reached the rural sector; and investment in educational and health services which should also be included, although it should be pointed out that the gap in this area is widening.

Credit funds directed to agricultural production have represented a very substantial part of the official budget for the agricultural sector. In spite of this, however, producers' access to public financing has always been very limited, especially in the case of seasonal lands, since the *ejidatarios* and small property owners are unable to adjust to the profit and guarantee criteria through which official agricultural banking operates. These producers have been caught in a vicious circle, because of their deficient accumulation which prevents them from being able to comply with the requirements. They thus continue to resort to non-institutional sources (sharks, and other money lenders) only further lessening any possibility of accumulation. The relative scarcity of operating credit further limits the options opened to these producers.

In areas of commercial agriculture, farmers have had relatively easy access to credit both from public and private sources. During the last forty years, private credit to this group grew at annual rates of above ten per cent. This can be explained in part, by the creation of a trust fund to guarantee and foster agricultural projects called *Fondo de Garantía y Fomento de la Agricultura*. This organization provided private banks with federal funds at low interest rates.

Market intervention aimed at regulating them has been one of the essential components of official policy to promote agriculture and cattle raising.

During the last two years of the Cardenist administration, a committee to regulate the markets for basic goods, the *Comité Regulador de los Mercados de Subsistencias* fulfilled a strategic function in the protection of small rural producers and consumers.

A good part of its actions were undertaken through worker and *campesino* organizations, which directly operated union stores and other facilities with open support from the government. At the end of Cárdenas' presidential term, the *Comité* came to be one of the central points under attack by the private sector, which accused them of unfair competition with traders.

Avila Camacho disbanded the *Comité*. Although inflationary pressure and other factors forced its reappearance under different guises between 1940 and 1970, it operated basically as a subsidy mechanism for urban consumers (within the policy of low incomes) and as a decisive backing to large commercial farmers. In the 1950s the guaranteed prices offered to producers of basic goods —above those of

the internal and external markets—, ensured crop profitability. In theory they were fixed in terms of the small producers needs ("It constitutes the minimum wage of the rural workers", said President López Mateos in 1964), but they rarely reached the *campesinos*, who were forced to sell their crops to middlemen. These in turn, together with the large farmers took advantage of the subsidy included in the official system. In 1963, when export surpluses of basic foodstuffs were beginning to appear and signals from the U.S. market induced a different product orientation, guaranteed prices were frozen and began to function as ceiling prices for the exclusive protection of urban consumers.

In the seventies, when the self-sufficiency objective was adopted as a result of the gravity of the increasing food production deficit, guaranteed prices increased and efforts were made to have these reach the *campesinos*. These efforts were interrupted by the 1976 crisis, and their effects were neither deep nor lasting, because they were not integrated to other elements of official policy towards the rural sector.

The *Compañía Nacional de Subsistencias Populares* (CONASUPO), the institution at present in charge of this specific task, as well as other institutions that preceded it, has fulfilled functions of the outmost importance in relation to the rural sector, throughout this period: the exportation of surpluses and importation of complementary production, the setting and administration of guaranteed prices, the operation of the greater part of the storage systems, the wholesale and retail distribution of basic products and other CONASUPO activities are key elements in the general strategy. Furthermore, the institution's flexibility, which allows for easy modifications of the aims of its operations, have turned it into an indicator of the correlation of forces, since it can readily respond to the pressure of different social groups, accomodating their demands.

The supply of fertilizer became a fundamental variable of the model as the Green Revolution proceeded. In the sixties, the industry was nationalized. Since then it has operated as a government monopoly, and production of nitrated and phosphated products increased over 20 times during the last two decades. The greater part has been directed to irrigated commercial agricultural lands because of the technical argument that it is in these areas that it can be most advantageously utilized. By the end of the 1960s, for instance, four states containing 42 per cent of the country's irrigated lands, absorbed 54 per cent of all fertilizers. Increasing subsidies to this operation have constituted additional backing for this group.

The Government exercises little control over the insecticide market. It only intervenes in the production of certain raw materials of petrochemical origin, and in the production of three products representing 15 per cent of total consumption. A few multinational companies exert almost absolute control over this market.

The production of improved seeds has been a matter of constant conflict during the last decades. Several institutions created at different times have constantly fought, first with large private producers, and later with certain international companies, the multiplication of genetic material produced within the framework of the Green Revolution. These institutions were the *Comisión Nacional del Maíz* created in 1947, the *Comisión para el Incremento y Distribución de Semillas Mejoradas*, founded some time later, and the *Productora Nacional de Semillas*, formed in 1961. Official production, however, has not been able to satisfy, to any significative extent, national needs for seeds, except in the case of wheat. Operations have been concentrated, naturally, in regions of commercial agriculture.

The task of agricultural expansion has traditionally been neglected by the Government, which lack an adequate number of qualified technicians and effective methods. The chronic scarcity of funds and the bureaucratization of these activities have been determining factors for qualified agronomists prefering to work directly with large farmers or else deciding to work independently, under conditions that reduce their efficiency.

In the 1940s, a special official aid programme resulted in Mexico's being the Latin American country with greatest agricultural mechanization. Between 1940 and 1950, as a result of substantial imports, the value of agricultural machinery in the hands of large producers showed a five fold increase, whereas that of the *ejidatarios* doubled and that corresponding to small holdings increased two and a half times.

During the sixties, when irrigation, improved seeds, fertilizers, guaranteed prices and mechanization fostered large commercial agriculture, the government began limiting imports in order to favour national production of agricultural equipment which since then has produced over 5,000 tractors a year.

Mexico has since lost her position in Latin America with respect to mechanization. At the same time she has a high degree of underutilizated equipment, as a result of both maintenance and operational problems (which reflect the compulsive pattern in the introduction of the process), and of its irrational concentration on a few over-mechanized areas.

Throughout this period, a variety of institutions were created by the Government, specializing in the regulation of specific markets (sugar, coffee, tobacco, henequen) and in agroindustrial operations. In some cases official agencies have acquired a monopoly status, over both internal and external markets, as well as with regard to industrial or commercial activities. They have generally adopted current forms of relations with agricultural producers, drawing them in form only, or in fact, into the company's operations. In many cases, they have formed a link between national and foreign industries that perform the final processing and the distribution of agricultural and livestock produce.

DIVORCE ON GROUNDS OF IMPOTENCE

Thus summarized, it is clear that Government actions in many ways conflicted with the *campesinos'* interests. And this is the group which had constituted the main force in the Revolution, from which the modern Mexican State emerged and which continues to be the social group with the highest numerical weight in the whole social conglomerate. This conflict is one of the central concerns of federal power and the dialectics of its relations with the *campesinos* has become the key to global political definitions of subsequent administrations.

From the federal power's point of view, the problem may be defined as the need to maintain the *campesinos* close enough to prevent them from becoming an independent and opposing force that might weaken the State, but at the same time conveniently distant in order to avoid being forced to yield their historic demands, which are in opposition to the general aims of its present course. From the *campesinos'* point of view the problem has similar characteristics. Since the central question concerning land tenure is related to federal power, there is also the question of access to credit, to inputs, to marketing, to guaranteed prices and all other support services needed for their survival and development. The *campesinos* cannot take their independence to the point of a radical political rupture with the authorities: those who do, find themselves immediately exposed to the loss of all the aforementioned official backing and to political repression. They would also be defenseless in the face of exploitation. Moving too close to federal power, on the contrary, would mean delaying indefinitely their claims and being caught up in bureaucratic entanglement, from which only marginal and passing concessions can be obtained and where only a few —those who integrate to the power structure—, are in a position to benefit.

This situation explains, in part, the evolution of rural organizations during the period. The *Confederación Nacional Campesina* (CNC), a national rural workers' organization, lost, in the 1940s along with its allies in the workers sector, its capacity for mobilization. Since then, it has operated as an agent and control organism, dedicated to defending the most urgent *campesino* demands and to keeping them at a prudent distant from federal power. Because of this, it has been, and continues being, the principal *campesino* organization in the country, although its militance is as weak as its real political and social capacity to negotiate. It has maintained a state of latency; there is no political organization capable of mobilizing a greater number of people than the CNC, but that capacity is only employed occasionally, mainly in the regional context and in general terms, to respond to initiatives from federal power.

In recent decades, some independent organizations have played a relevant role in the mobilization of *campesinos*: the *Unión General de Obreros y Campesinos de México* (UGOCM), during the fifties and the sixties; the *Central Campesina Independiente* (CCI), in the fifties

and sixties; movements led by people like Jaramillo, Lucio Cabañas and Genaro Vázquez in the sixties; the *Consejo Agrarista Mexicano* (CAM), the *Movimiento de los Cuatrocientos Pueblos*, the *Consejo Nacional Cardenista*, the *Movimiento Nacional Plan de Ayala* and others in the seventies.

After short periods of great influence, none of these have gone very far. The UGOCM led to great mobilization by the end of the 1950s. It had wide national scope in spite of the fact that it was concentrated in the northwest of the nation. After having obtained the redistribution of some large estates, some of them from foreign owners, the UGOCM began to be assimilated into the official apparatus. After the death of its leader, Jacinto López, it began to disintegrate and lost importance at a national level, retaining it only in some regions. Something similar happened with the CCI, which fought important battles in the seventies, within the context of a national liberation movement called the *Movimiento de Liberación Nacional*, but since its incorporation into an agreement known as the *Pacto de Ocampo* headed by the CNC and promoted by the government at the beginning of the seventies, it has been converted into an auxiliary agency in the CNC line. The Jaramillo movement has played a minimal role since the death of its leader; those of Lucio Cabañas and Genaro Vázquez ended in guerrilla movements of limited scope and were extinguished together with them. The CAM has played an ambivalent role of agitation and only on a local level.

Under these conditions, the *campesinos* have had to reconstruct their organizations on a local and regional basis, utilizing their communal traditions and fighting experience to give modern political significance, based on solidarity, to their social structures. Thus, a myriad of independent extremely combative organizations, were born in *ejidos* and villages. Many of them have taken the form of politically oriented social movements, more than formal political organizations. Frequently *campesinos* who are members of these organizations, become militant in other *campesino* organizations or political parties in order to make their demands felt. These organizations have gradually been adjusting their efforts in order to express themselves through more general movements. Since August 8, 1979, for example, when they gathered independently to commemorate Emiliano Zapata's centennial, an important group of them formed a coordinating organization, called *Coordinadora Nacional Plan de Ayala*. During the first six months it organized two important conferences called *Encuentros de Organizaciones Campesinas Independientes*, which were attended by *campesinos* and their representatives from many different parts of the Mexican Republic.

The *Consejo Supremo de Pueblos Indígenas* deserves special mention. Created on the initiative of the CNC and the Government at the beginning of the seventies with relatively little initial representation, it established in its structure the organizing principles of the Indian peoples. In this way, it has gained growing autonomy from governmental powers, making progress in the independent representation

of the six million Indian *campesinos* that it integrates.

In this context, it has been especially difficult for the authorities to bring the present plan to its ultimate consequences. In the first half of the 1970s, the *campesino* mobilization led by the State and its policy of limited concessions, acted as a channel for many *campesino* demands and encouraged their expectations for change. In the second half of the decade, it became necessary to frustrate those expectations and give warning that the agrarian redistribution would come to an end soon. This occurred within the context of a serious rural crisis, when the latent *campesino* restlessness became inflamed by local conditions and by the movements and organizations these conditions have generated and which fit naturally into those of national scope. Rural violence has thus increased to levels that were unknown some decades ago. Local repression exercised by authorities, in the midst of conflicts between federal public officials and those of the state and municipal level, is added to the direct action of the *guardias blancas* or private police of large land owners, *caciques*, cattlemen and other agents, as well as that of the *campesinos* themselves. These acts, that have awakened general concern, reflect the exhaustion of political negotiation formulae within a project that explicitly excludes *campesinos* who do not accept their exclusion, among other things because of the absence of real options.

The global logic of national and international economic and social forces is forcing the Mexican State to establish more and more precisely the terms of its radical divorce from the *campesinos*, whose demands are considered incompatible with those of the adopted development model. But at the same time, it appears incapable of overcoming the present difficulties or getting out of the blind alley in which it finds itself. In practice, it has been impossible for the economy as a whole to absorb in other agricultural, industrial and service occupations, the *campesino* labour force that the process continues to displace. According to the conventional patterns of the model, it is not feasible to overcome the present productive crisis when the food deficit has reached dangerous levels and the traditional contribution of the sector in the generation of foreign currency is fading. Though the government could adapt itself to the new circumstances, redirecting its efforts to give firm support to the *campesino* economy, it faces difficulties in attempting this, for it is tied to alliances made since the 1940s aimed at accomplishing present goals. Only effective reconstitution of these alliances, the realization of which appears to be beset with difficulties and limitations, could avoid a radical divorce between the Government and the *campesinos* —and strictly speaking, between the State and the *campesinos*—, that neither side seems capable of surviving unharmed.

PART TWO
THE PROTAGONISTS

The principal protagonists of rural Mexico will be introduced in this part of the book.

Brief reference is made in the first chapter to the economic context within which they function. Basically, what is offered is a theoretical and analytical framework against which the synchronic background of the following chapters can be understood. The protagonists to be found at the different levels of multilineal development, associated with the various "phases" and modes of productive behaviour, will then be introduced. This framework traces the central underlying tendencies which govern the behaviour of the different protagonists. It traces at both national and international level the determining factors to which they are subjected and to which they react according to their previous historical burden.

The protagonists described in the first and second chapters have been grouped according to how they identify with capital or work. This classification was chosen in preference to one concentrating on productive units or communities, life-styles, or family and individual patterns, the assumption being that the fundamental homogenization of the protagonists separates them from their social production relations and from their position in the productive process. This kind of approach considers therefore, these relations to be determining factors in the general behaviour of these productive agents which retain, obviously, the heterogeneity derived from ethnic characteristics, regions, income level, level of development of productive forces, etc. Space restrictions have meant that the description of these have been reduced to a minimum.

In the fourth chapter, an attempt is made to remedy, in part, the limitations of having adopted a typology approach, through the overall presentation by crops and regions of the characteristics of the protagonists.

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CHAPTER ONE
THE ECONOMIC CONTEXT: THE GLOBAL LOGIC OF HOW THE AGENTS FUNCTION

The most important protagonist in rural Mexico is neither Mexican nor to be found in Mexico. Although this statement still causes horrified reactions, it is in reality, a simple statement of fact: that agribusiness exists as a global reality, structuring world domination and controlling food production. One hundred large multinational corporations already control more than half the international exchange of food and will soon control half of its production. Five of them handle 85% of the world's grain exchange. Cultivation itself has lost importance within their operations, it constitutes only 15% of the aggregate value of the food industry in the United States. But this cultivation is determined and controlled by the overall operation. The existence of these huge systems for transforming agricultural products represent, without a doubt, the multinationalization of production, the multinationalization of capital and its system of know-how, culminating with the multinationalization of commercialization circuits. This last element, obviously, completes the structure of domination and control".[1]

This comment could be applied to almost all the countries in the peripheral areas, because of the very globality of its nature. However, when applied to Mexico it is of special importance and takes on strange shades of meaning. A variety of factors, some as obvious as the closeness of the United States, have accelerated the process of the country's insertion into the new international division of labour which has been furthered by multinational capital. The internal structure of production and the organization of labour are determined by the actions and economic reasoning of multinational corporations and through the commercial and financial relations that Mexican producers have with them abroad. This interplay

[1] Enrique Ruiz García, "El Agribusiness, el mayor negocio del siglo", in CRITICA POLITICA, No. 3, April 15-30, 1980, p. 41.

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of relations includes, of course, the periodic hiring of a substantial portion of the Mexican rural work force in the southern fields of the United States, a phenomenon that plays a decisive role in the general functioning of the rural sector in Mexico.

The presence of national and multinational capital in rural Mexico is part of a completely generalized reality. It is not always, however, an obvious one. If apparent phenomena and description, the elements which usually generate "positivist knowledge" are taken into consideration, then the protagonists of production often seem foreign to this determining reality. The quality of this kind of knowledge results from the kind of analytical treatment and theoretical elaborations made. These methodological tools, make up the core of the book and should therefore, be made explicit here, even if only briefly and partially, in order that the reader know which criteria led to the information in this section.

THE GENERAL FRAMEWORK

The productive structure of modern Mexican agrarian history has been moulded in terms of the operative modalities of capital which have given rise to the concurrent lines of development in the rural sector. Capital has subordinated the productive practices of rural Mexico and has inserted them into its own logic. However, the importance of this role, can only be understood by looking at how capital has interacted with the conditions which have arisen within Mexican society since the Revolution. The fact that capital has had to adapt to these conditions has meant that concrete courses of action have been defined for its diverse modes of operating.

As previously mentioned, an explicit constitutional decree made land the exclusive patrimony of the Nation, so that it can, if it so choses, turn the land over to be usufructed by individuals thereby establishing it as private property. But by so doing, it vetoes the participation of mercantile groups in the direct exploitation of the land. This legal measure and the socio-political context associated with it, has forced capital to look for uncharacteristic ways of generalizing its social relations and accumulation mechanisms. Within this general framework, the different ways capital operates (industrial, commercial and financial) have given way to models for the organization of production, which can be classified according to: the general guidelines imposed on the productive structure of the sector; the importance of the characteristic ways capital operates within the overall organization of the agrarian system; and the kind of social relations between the agrarian protagonists, differentiated according to the line of production.

Taking this as a basis, three evolutionary phases can be distinguished in the history of the capitalist development of the Mexican

agricultural sector throughout this century: the mercantile capitalist phase, the period of agrarian developmentalism, and the agroindustrial multinationalization stage of this sector, together with the expansion of extensive livestock practices.

The mercantile capitalist phase is characterized by production oriented towards satisfying external demands and directed by the central presence of commercial capital. This phase is characterized by the strong dependence of the northwestern horticultural and fruit production and the north and northeastern cattle raising activities on the North American market requirements. It reinforces the nation's long agricultural export tradition.

The agrarian developmentalist phase, guided by federal power, falls within the industrialization project through which the functions of the agricultural and cattle raising sector were redefined. Modernization attempts were channelled through activities related to the Green Revolution (technohogical innovation, financing and infrastructure); and to the quantitative and qualitative expansion of public enterprises in the commercialization and transformation processes of certain basic foodstuffs and traditional products.

The rural agroindustrial multinationalization stage is characterized by a reorientation of productive activity towards the demands of a concentrated internal market, with its new diversified consumer patterns from which the bulk of the population is excluded.[2] This reorientation is encouraged and guided by the overwhelming presence of the multinational agroindustries. This stage responds to the worldwide social fact of the institutionalization of hunger through the reorganization of eating habits and the concentration of productive efforts on social groups that consume more than 3,500 calories, that is, the process of waste.

The protagonists corresponding to the diverse stages of development are disclosed indiscriminately against the synchronic background of the following chapters, in just the same way as the phases represented here as a lineal process, coexist within the present reality of rural Mexico. In fact, not only has overall evolution been multilineal, but with the appearance of a new phase or stage, past phases are refunctionalized although not eliminated. For example the current importance of agroindustrial multinationalization does not mean that the agro-exporter's role is eliminated from one of the sectors in the rural economy. This fulfills another aspect of the process of

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[2] This is not an absolute exclusion. The "hungry sector" of the population —that which consumes less than 2,750 calories and 80 grams of protein per person per day— increases its consumption of non-nutritive "food" in parallel form to the deterioration of its diet. In Mexico basic consumption for the bulk of the population deteriorated over the last twenty years, but the consumption of soft drinks, refined flour and sugar products showed spectacular increases.

insertion of the Mexican economy as both buyer and seller into the world alimentary system.

These "phases" —which can also be seen as current modes of differing importance within the totality— can be described in the following terms:

a) The Agrocommercial Operation

The process of capitalist articulation within the Mexican agricultural and cattle raising sector, its expansion in terms of dynamics, and its integration into the framework of the new international division of labour are all related to the increasing control of multinational agribusiness over market mechanisms. It has used this control to gradually integrate local and regional producers into its mercantile sphere. Throughout this process, productive specialization patterns were imposed on the rural sector, thus leading the way towards the relationship of dependency on agribusiness as the principal, or only buyer.

The position of agribusiness within the market has enabled it to impose mechanisms for price determination, according to the following factors: the quality of the product (classification, type, standardization); the volume of demand; storage and transportation capacity; sales contracts; financing of production; technical assistance and the allocation of industrial inputs and technical equipment.

This mode of commercial operation encouraged differentiation between producers within the agribusiness sphere of influence, thus reinforcing the capitalist orientation of small private producers. Stimulated by such encouragement, they tried to expand their exploitation over other small properties or over the *ejidos* by means of direct coercion, legal land disputes or the illegal leasing of plots.

b) Agrarian Developmentalism

The industrialization project of the Mexican government gave it a strategic role in the process of "productive modernization". Its support of technological innovation, through the Green Revolution, encouraged agricultural forms of organization which emphasized the differentiation of producers and the diversification of their behaviour in relation to the market. Thus credit has been used as an active tool in technological expansion and has been a key element for initiating projects related to the sowing of hybrid seeds, mechanization, fertilization, fumigation, irrigation, etc. It has been possible to expand the context of "modern" commercial agriculture, so closely linked to multinational agribusiness operations and its local partners, through measures like these, complemented by the

construction of public and industrial services, technical assistance, education and agrarian service activities and price regulating mechanisms.

Government action has likewise aimed at generating new dynamics around both basic and traditional crops. It has actively intervened in the commercialization process by regulating the basic grains market through producer and consumer price systems, and by advocating the establishing of product classification and standardization norms. A system of public property was initiated for the primary processing of traditional crops (sugar, coffee, sisal, cocoa, etc.) that centralized demand. An increasing number of direct producers were thus won over. In many cases the government offered commercialization and price guarantees, which encouraged reproduction and made the capitalist organization of production profitable.

c) Agroindustrial Multinationalization

Multinational agroindustries injected a new dynamic relation into Mexican rural production in keeping with the world-wide tendency initiated in the 1960s and increased during the 1970s. It integrated the agricultural and cattle raising economy into the new international model of production organization, which spreads international patterns of consumption throughout internal markets. It also subordinated the national economy to metropolitan reproduction, thus transforming it into a buyer of agricultural inputs of imported industrial origin (machines and equipment, fertilizers, insecticides, management technology, packing systems, etc.). In this way, traditional and especially basic crops, have been displaced by others or they have been made so much less profit-producing, that the land is abandoned. The food deficit is thus increased and this can only be covered by importing, which completes the internationalization cycle.

Multinational agroindustry placed itself in productive areas where it was able to use its technological advantages to impose those new patterns of production, which were actively related to the process of technological innovation. Producers had to act according to capitalist logic as far as crops were concerned, in order to adapt to the new kind of demands being made by multinational agroindustry. This meant applying a new kind of rationality to the destination and use of the soil, which resulted in the displacement of basic crops.

Multinational agroindustry has also generated a dynamic process integrating and subordinating agricultural production and industrial transformation and processing. By placing itself at strategic points in the agroindustrial chain, it is able to apply an accumulation model based on the absorption of increasing aggregate value rates throughout the productive phases. It has established a production, financing and food consumption system through multiple regulating mechanisms for subordinating these sectors. The distribu-

tion of resources, production and productivity levels, technological allotment and the final orientation of production within this system are directly determined by the overall accumulation strategy.

The system imposed by multinational agroindustry —and also by national agroindustry, which now functions according to the same logic— comprises, in synthesis, the following elements: "a) the quantity, quality and type of inputs (land, work, credit, fertilizers, insecticides, machinery and equipment, technical assistance, research and systems of agricultural administration); b) the price of these inputs (including salaries and services); c) the productive processes in agriculture; d) the market processes (exportation of agricultural products, payment to the producers, prices for market services, transportation management, packing and storage, distribution to wholesale merchants, retail merchants and consumers, and the destination of export articles); e) the earnings on capital investments and on the use of agricultural technology, as well as the way these are distributed among the beneficiaries".[3]

MODELS OF PRODUCTION ORGANIZATION

The overwhelming presence of capital expressed through the diversity of "operative forms", has been responsible for organizing rural economic practices. The simultaneous or successive use of commercial, industrial or financial ways of operating led to a variety of different relations with direct producers, which are redefined by the type of production and its final destination.

The different manifestations of capital in the Mexican agricultural sector indicate how, historically, this has "penetrated" the rural sector, that is to say, how it has propagated capitalist social relations of production. They also indicate the true models of organization of the different protagonists in relation to the productive process, and reflect their interactive situation. The importance a specific "operative form" of capital has within the productive system is that it permits differentiation between the relative position of the agrarian protatonists and their degree of association to the dynamics generated by it.

The imposition of capitalism in rural Mexico under these generalized historical terms does not imply the exclusion of specific forms of capitalist accumulation (local, regional, sectorial, etc.). The fact is, however, that it absorbs these specific forms of agricultural and cattle raising development into its sphere of influence, thus

[3] Ernest Feder, EL IMPERIALISMO FRESA, Editorial Campesina, México, 1977, pp. 18 - 19.

subordinating them to its own accumulation model, and accelerating the internationalization process through the four models of organization associated with it for the last two decades:

a) The "Commercial Agriculture" Model

"Commercial agriculture" was one of the first models or patterns to be introduced into the country. Its direct ties to crops destined to satisfy the demands of the North American market, indicate the intention to convert Mexican agrarian land into the hinterland of the western North American markets.

Agribusiness functions as a triggering agent for this system of interrelations and as the focal point of the productive activities of thousands of national producers. Agribusiness regulates prices and production through the control of market mechanisms and the presentation, packaging and transporting of products.

The sensitizing of the Mexican economy to the "signals" of the North American market has affected two main consumer lines: that of fresh fruit and vegetables during the winter and early spring, when there is a decrease in the production of certain items in the United States; and that of frozen and processed products for general consumer use.

This resulted from certain comparative advantages of Mexican horticultural and fruit production. Since harvest times were different, it was able to supply the North American market in times of relative scarcity. And there were substantial differences in labour costs and in the general context of production, given the overall protection that the Mexican government gave its producers. These advantages, however, have not resulted in better conditions of accumulation for direct producers, because of the intervention in production of North American distributors and brokerage agents in Mexico.

To ensure control of the productive process, agrocommerce intermediaries have used financial commercial and technical assistance mechanisms in two main ways: agricultural contracts, and the leasing of land. This has enabled agrocommerce to incorporate direct producers into its system of crop cultivation, thereby absorbing *campesino* labour deprived of direct control over its own production.

Under the agricultural contract scheme, the committment between agrocommerce and producers is not simply a contract of sale, that is, it is not restricted merely to the turning in of a predetermined quantity of production, but it implies the adoption of a complex set of productive practices: type of plants used, machinery, fertilizers, insecticides, irrigation systems, etc. Such "committed" inputs have to be acquired by credit from the State, a private bank or the agrocommerce. The productive processes themselves are controlled

through "technical assistance services" that agrocommerce makes available. This means the direct producers are reduced to merely fulfilling operative functions, as if they were overseers, although, at the same time, they have to assume the risks and uncertainties involved in a productive process with which they are unfamiliar.

In the latter case, when agrocommerce leases plots of land, it directly assumes an owner function by contracting workers and fixing wage levels. This model is only used when the other one cannot be applied, because of the inherent risks involved in this kind of illegal exploitation and because it does not allow the direct producers to take full advantage of the resources through an increase in the rate of exploitation.

International agrocommerce, usually finds it can best operate in association with large national capitalist producers and local or regional *caciques*, who are able to use direct coercion or monopolistic, commercial mechanisms, to establish local or subregional collection systems linked to packaging and export loading centres. The direct application of agricultural contract or land leasing schemes, frees agrocommerce of risks, inefficiencies and a variety of limitations, and makes the need to sharing profits an acceptable cost.

Obviously, the expansion of this system generates permanent pressure on that land which is controlled by *campesinos*, both small holders and *ejidatarios*, as well as on their cultivation habits. This pressure is an indication of the contradiction existing between the social protagonists in their far-reaching struggle for control of productive resources and over the use and final destination of production. It also reflects the dispute on a national level over how to define the role of production organizers, and the mechanisms to regulate the relations between them.

The fact that national intermediary agents are found in the production and commercialization processes, mean that a local circuit for appropriating surplus can be established. This accumulation increases and reproduces through investment in complementary areas of agricultural commerce (agencies for the sale of machinery, industrial inputs, etc.) and in the field of financial capital. All of this means that the interests of these sectors are directed towards those of agrocommerce.

b) The "Industrial Agriculture" Model

For the last ten years in rural Mexico, there has been a tendency for the productive forms of capital, controlled by multinational agroindustrial corporations to dominate over other agribusiness forms.

Since first appearing in this country, this form of productive cap-

ital has regulated its activities in terms of the internal market, while at the same time reshaping the dynamics of this market. It has tried to diversify it by promoting new eating habits, defined in terms of producer convenience and not consumer necessity. Although this constitutes the principal aim of its operations, it also acts according to the determinations of North American demands, especially in the line of frozen and canned fruits and textiles.

Even though agroindustry adopts different attitudes towards internal and external demands, it always tends to impose norms with the following characteristics: change in cultivation patterns, where traditional grains are substituted for industrial crops; growing specialization of processable products at local and regional levels; change in cultivation habits, related not only to an increase in profit, but also to product adaptability to industrial processing requirements; change in technological patterns, tending towards the intensive use of capital by using imported agricultural inputs which take over from hand labour.

Agroindustry usually operates, as does agrocommerce, through the use of intermediaries, the direct or indirect character of which depends on whether control is exercised at the productive process level or in the area of commercialization. When it uses technological and financial, as well as market mechanisms, as is generally the case, it manages to capture a growing volume of the surplus generated by direct producers. Both agribusiness and agroindustry have in this way, widened the process of rural differentiation and of total or partial conversion of *campesinos* to a wage system. It has also tended to encourage the reclassification of the agricultural protagonists through systems of land leasing, thus accentuating and consolidating the subordination of labour to capital and its inclusion in the logic of the latter.

c) The "Public Capitalist Agriculture" Model

The Mexican government, consistent with the State's overall project, has directly intervened in the propagation of rural capitalist relations in three main ways: by creating and administrating irrigated areas and by regulating agrarian redistribution; by introducing State commercialization and processing of production; and by the drawing up "integral plans" for agrarian reform, in many cases related to guidelines of international financing organisms.

Irrigation areas had, originally, been created for obvious agrarian reasons, as a way of overcoming the limitations of the *campesino* economy within the context of promoting collective organization of production within the *ejidos*. Since 1940, however, a variety of new conditions have redirected this process. Those producers within the irrigation areas who were capable of accumulating, began to create pressure on the then current land tenure system. They thus identi-

fied themselves with those who wanted to bring an end to Cardenist ways, in order to initiate "productive modernization" in conventional capitalist terms. Old revolutionaries and new civil servants, speculators and former Porfirian *latifundistas*, some of them North American[4] tightened their mutual bonds, and renewed efforts to pressurize the government using their new identity: they were the spokesmen of the regime, the unheard voice of Mexico's rural *empresarios*, the incarnation of modern ideas needed in rural areas to counteract the newly undertaken industrial urban development project. The beneficiaries of technological innovations, of credit, of technical assistance and of guaranteed prices joined forces with them, thereby closely linking them to the commercial agricultural plan directed by multinational agribusiness. This kind of support ensured the intensive and short-term accumulation prospects for these "modernized *empresarios*". The changes in production which had come about encompassed all commercial agriculture operations, making its functions more complex and facilitating the increasing participation of these "farmers" in the widened sphere of commercial and financial capital, towards which they were directing their investments.

Another line of government intervention, involved regulating the basic grain market. This has encompassed strictly commercial activities as well as those related to the partial processing of products. On the one hand, many public enterprises have operated monopolies controlling the commercialization of certain products or have marginally intervened in the markets of others. The objective in both instances, has been to subject commercialization of agricultural and cattle raising products to overall fixed conditions, intended to stabilize prices for the consumer (within the protective policies of industrial development) and to channel resources towards producers. The logic of these activities has tended to encourage producers to adopt capitalist ways of functioning rather than for entrepreneur profits to be maximized or for production to be subjected to social necessities, although efforts have also been made in this direction. On the other hand, these same public enterprises, along with a few others, have been directly concerned with the industrial processing of production. When this processing is not completed, which often happens, such enterprises function as intermediaries for national or international agribusiness, which finalize the productive process and set the commodities in circulation. Throughout all of these commercial or industrial operations, public enterprises have managed to integrate many producers into their sphere of influence, under similar and parallel terms to those of agribusiness.

Finally, the government has also organized "integrated agrarian reform" programmes, adjusting them, in many cases, to the specific re-

[4] See Cynthia H. de Alcántara, LA MODERNIZACION DE LA AGRICULTURA MEXICANA, Siglo XXI Editores, México, 1978.

quirements of international financial organizations. The difficulties inherent in trying to integrate the collective organizations of producers subject (because of Constitutional limitations) to the *ejidal* system into the orbit of capital, has provided a permanent obstacle to direct intervention of national and multinational agribusiness in these enterprises. To overcome this obstacle, the government has acted, on a number of occasions, as intermediary or substitute for agribusiness, by promoting and controlling the collective organization of production. Through these mechanisms, the collectively organized producers retain the formal ownership of their land and their capacity for deciding on its utilization, although in reality this is transferred to public enterprises or institutions. In this way, technical organizations assume power without responsibility and the producers, responsibilities without power.[5] The use of the land, cultivation habits, conditions under which production is organized and carried out, and all the other aspects of the productive and commercial process, are, in one way or another, handed over to the scope of decisions of public organisms, which reproduce and amplify agribusiness patterns and serve as their intermediaries.

d) The "Extensive Cattle Raising" Model

Capitalist development of cattle raising has imposed its peculiarities on the agricultural and cattle raising sector in different ways. In the first place, it puts great pressure on the system of land use (through the extensive character of these exploitations and as the "legal" mechanism for property expansion), which affects the very forms of land control. Secondly, such pressure modifies how agricultural land is used, by introducing cultivation patterns directly related to animal feeding. Thirdly, this new ordering results in forms of production and social organization being integrated and subordinated to its sphere of influence, when previously they had remained outside it.

The basic feature of this kind of exploitation derives from the association of northern calf breeders with the important beef farmers in the United States, and their intensive feeding units. The demand for export livestock of maximum weight, to be produced in as short a period as possible, created a demand on the part of the cattle producers, for the production of fodder, balanced foods, etc. This in turn, affected crop structure and the organization of production.

The attention paid to the export market altered productive patterns for the internal supply of meat, by designating for the former those

[5] See, among others, David Barkin, DESARROLLO REGIONAL Y REORGANIZACION CAMPESINA, Editorial Nueva Imagen, México, 1978.

areas which traditionally had been dedicated to the latter. This in turn gave rise to various pressures, which caused cattle raising to extend over agricultural land, much of it *ejidal* and communal, which further subordinated *campesino* cattle raising to the logic of capitalist enterprises.

THE OVERALL DYNAMICS

The tendency towards the multinationalization of the Mexican agricultural sector, encouraged by the agroindustrial system, is based on two movements. On one side, from the productive point of view, the dynamics of intermediate demand directs all agricultural production and introduces crop patterns which take over from the production of direct foodstuffs. This movement is complemented by the tendency to expand extensive cattle raising activities, thus putting pressure on land use and restricting the areas of subsistence agricultural production, so that these are forced to move to eroded or forestal areas, with the resulting ecosystem deterioration. On the other side, the trend towards multinationalization is based on the integration of direct producers to the sphere of the market economy and to the productive logic and accumulation of agribusiness. This subordination of labour to capital will not disappear with the dissolution of pre-existing social relations, nor with the destruction of previous productive logic. It seeks to adapt forms of land tenure and legally recognized labour organization to its own mechanisms for extraction of surplus, which it introduces into the spheres of production, circulation and finance.

The basis of the overall strategy for propagating the agribusiness market economy in this country, finds concrete expression in its tendency to intervene in productive processes through an intermediary system. This system is made up of capitalist entrepreneurs, as the main agents of agroindustrial effort in rural areas, and of the *campesino* producers' work subordinated to capital. In this way, agribusiness manages to transfer the bulk of exploitation risks to the direct producers (which in fact they no longer are), and permits them to take care of the "organization" of their own production. Thus, in the case of *campesino* labour, the fiction is created of a class possessing its own productive factors, and exploiting (under the form of wage labour) members of its own collective organizations. Some careless authors, because they do not see the fiction, that is, the vicarious function of the "direct producer", place these "direct producers" amongst the land owners, although they do characterize them according to their size and other aspects. Finally the coexistence of *campesino* productive forms with market relations, means that within the overall strategy, labour force is available at a lower cost than the average wage, a fact that contributes to the strengthening of *campesino* reproduction as a productive agent.

CHAPTER TWO
FARMERS, CATTLE RAISERS AND AGRICULTURAL AND CATTLE RAISING ENTERPRISES

"The town is full of echoes. They seem to be locked up in nooks of walls or under stones. When you walk, you feel someone treading on your shadow. You hear creaks. Laughter. Old, weary laughter. And worn-out voices. You can hear all of this. I'm sure the day will come when these sounds will be no more."

Juan Rulfo, PEDRO PARAMO

The protagonists of rural Mexico described in this chapter live in a very characteristic way: they are never what they seem to be. The distance produced between the tangible manifestations of their being and their intimate reality determine this. They are very rarely what they think they are. Those who act as if they were the protagonists, the authentic stars of the show wearing known disguises, turn out only to be emanations or some other representation of the authentic protagonists. But these very same people, who lead the movement and capture all the dynamism, tend to disappear into thin air. It is difficult to find their concrete personifications in daily life. To tear apart this world of shadows, to trap them in their ghost-like dance, is a task long since fulfilled by artistic imagination. The first to do so was Pedro Páramo in Juan Rulfo's book of the same name. But science is still struggling with this hope, trapped in its own inertness and clumsiness. Right now all attempts have to admit their rehearsal-like nature.

PHANTOMS

Phantom.- something apparent to sense but with no substantial existence // Elusive or visionary // Affectitious, dumb person // something to scare simple people.

THE FARMERS (Small Private Land holders)

The farmers are deeply individualistic, stubborn in their attitude towards their land as means of subsistence (as if it were an eggshell which can only be pecked once in a lifetime). They are frequently innovative, as far as technology is concerned, but conservative or reactionary when it comes to politics. They are a dying group in rural Mexico. Those who still believe, due to their age or their naïveté, are fierce, proud, serious and haughty. Those who are already coming out of this long held illusion, cannot hide their unbearable melancoly. All of them are experts in agriculture and have explored their land inch by inch. But that, maybe, is all they know.

They are the product of two great trends towards land tenure: the colonial and the liberal.

As children of the colony, they were born and grew up at the threshold of the large *haciendas*, with which they maintained a contradictory relationship of tension-necessity, characteristic of the bastard status they had. Sometimes they were suppliers for the food requirements of the *haciendas*, which were mainly interested in monocultivation for exportation. Sometimes they were granted a piece of land as a reward for their support of the domination campaigns promoted by their bosses, the *hacendados* and other agents. Some resulted from a lifetime's savings, or as a consolation prize for an adventure which never achieved its ultimate goal. Attacked by both, communities and *haciendas*, they installed themselves, with difficulty, into the empty chinks left by these but without ever achieving great splendour.

Later, in the *Restauración Republicana* in 1867, they were a promised paradise: they promised this to themselves as well as the destiny they so desired; they also promised it to the liberals who had laid their greatest hopes on them: they were the foundations on which to build an equal and modern country, the anarchist republic of small producers, ever present element of the liberal dream. But that was all, a dream. They could not do anything against the power of the *compañías deslindadoras* and the unlimited expansion of the *haciendas*. It is clear that "the boss was the boss".

Another moment of illusion, in the third decade of this century, gave them perhaps their most active period in rural Mexico. The 1917 Constitution had already foreseen their situation. The Constitution gave the nation ownership over the land, but also put it in charge of "constituting private property". On September 1st, 1925, President Calles presented for approval his bill on the division of plots of land and the delivering of *ejidal* lands as personal property. He claimed that the introduction of the individual property principle would increase agricultural production and would involve the *campesino* more in the improvement of cultivating methods. Luis I. León Calles, *Secretario de Agricultura*, argued in defense of the project

saying that people should not be afraid of *campesino* impoverishment, because the *ejidal* plot was not the classical bourgeois model of small holdings: "We are sure", he said "that there are *campesinos* who tanks to their energy, their intelligence and their nature, are above the rest of the *campesinos* and consequently have far reaching tasks ahead of them". These tasks were very concrete: to acquire land from their neighbours to become modern farmers who might eventually enter into the commercial and industrial work. As will be remembered, in the 1920s, the improvement plans for this type of producers were drawn up, the rhetorical arguments against the *hacienda* were forgotten and land redistribution was kept at as low an ebb as the *campesinos* would allow. The agrarian winds, which blew again in the Cárdenas government, opened up the way for all these small producers, whose numbers increased at the same rate as the *ejidos*, and although they had less land, it was of better quality.

This is how the model, later to be associated with the Green Revolution, found them. They became the social protagonists hiding the real process of land concentration. In some villages there are still old posters from President Miguel Alemán's period (1946 - 52), which show a fat, and dark skinned farmer* smiling optimistically towards the future, from his properly cultivated farm, with his tractor, his cows, his poultry and anything he could have thought of. In opposition to this dream of Cárdenas' followers of a Mexico made up of *ejidos* and small industrial communities, was the vigorous dream of great urban industry and of properous individual rural producers, full of company spirit and innovative capacity. The improvement plans were directed towards them, had always been directed towards them, yet only in rhetoric or appearance.

It was really only fiction: some assumed it was a true project and suffered the consequences of their naïveté; others consciously used it in order to give "social protection" to the concentration process they were promoting. After a few years, a new term began to appear to distinguish this group from that which was forming along side it. People began to talk about authentic small holders. The implication of this was that some owners were not in fact authentic, i.e. *latifundistas* and agricultural and cattle raising enterprises which adopted the legal appearance of the constitutionally permitted small holdings. These were thus able to hide their true intentions and activities, which will be described later. The authentic small holders were, thus, those who existed within the legal limits of small holdings, as independent producers who really tried to be such. They were really not at all far from Zapata's principle "The land for those who work it". But they adopted this particular tenure system, and not that of the *ejidos* and communities, probably because they did not have any other practical option. They either preferred

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* In English in the original

the promise of autonomy apparently offered by this modality or had some other reason. Many of them had worked for the Porfirian *haciendas* and had never had access to the *ejidos* and communities, or had they taken any part in their struggle. They did not have land to recover, that is, in order to have access to the land for the first time, they adopted this modality or had it adopted for them.

Little by little, this group started to fall apart. A good many of them became *minifundistas*, who found themselves in worse conditions than the *ejidatarios* and *comuneros*, both with regard to the size of their plots of land and to their socio-economic situation. Evidently, they were the favourites of those who were guiding the process since the *ejidos* and communities offered greater resistance. Eventually, most of these authentic small holders became workers subordinated to capital under different modalities and conditions. We will deal with their situation in the following chapter. This much diminished group only has a few survivors throughout the country. In fact, they only become relevant when rural Mexico's dominant protagonists use them as an effective screen, to resist pressure for land redistribution. Their authenticity, that individualism which keeps them irrationally tied to living conditions over which they no longer have control, makes them inflammable material of great utility to those who cannot show their real face.

The fact that they are producers who combine their own and family work with temporary, or permanent employment as wage-labourers, is one of the crucial points for their survival. As transitory protagonists, they have not been able to differentiate between the personal function of their job and the organization of salaried work. This means there is permanent debate over their own salaries and the obtaining of an average profit rate. Year after year they begin their task with an ever present dream: they remember the time when "they had a good stroke of luck", without knowing either how or why, when they suddenly accumulated an amazing profit and this they try to recapture with the utmoset of diligence and ingenuity. Nevertheless year after year, they are limited to doing only their own job or fearfully seeing how debts accumulate.

The fate of this protagonist, almost completely subordinated to agribusiness, is objectively similar to that of the *campesinos* and other agriculture workers. Yet it is difficult for them to perceive it in this way for that would mean giving up a lifetime's dream, backed by generations of people fighting for the impossible and constantly encouraged by the rhetoric always used to glorify and stimulate them. It also means accepting themselves as proletariat. And this not only bothers them intimately and consequently is rejected, but also awakes a very concrete concern about the lack of prospects seen for this group up until now.

Independently of the functions they still fulfill in the overall logic, it is possible that their persistence is due to their historic substance. It is true they do not come from the Mesoamerican

past associated with the communitary impulse, but they did arise from profound forces developed under a variety of circumstances. It can be argued that Villa's forces represented those protagonists. Let us go into this in more detail.

General Francisco Villa's Northern Division has a mottled history, compared with that of Zapata's forces. The southern leader probably never had the number of men Villa had ready for fighting and from whom he managed to make a real army. Zapata's men were concentrated in different types of guerrilla fighting, while Villa fought on the open field against professional armies and succeeded in defeating them for several years. But Villa never had Zapata's strength based on village autonomy: he did not form part of a widening of the community. Zapata did and his people substituted their ploughs for rifles only to later return to their lands. Their armies were formed by aggregation, that is, men from every social condition willingly joined it; they came along in small groups or even, at times, whole villages. But integrated social groups were not common for Villa. The Northern Division was an army of masses, based on the homogeneous integration of more or less individualized fighters. It was not the organized combination of a living social corpus.

Some authors have seen only outcasts of the Mexican society in Villa's armies. For many, Villa's men were simply bandits, cattle stealers, tramps, men without past nor futuer, unknown creditors ready for violence and robbery. And, doubtless, there were some of these men in the Northern Division, but they were not the only ones. Their behaviour was different because they came from the north; they lacked the Mesoamerican social background and the community integration found in the central or southestern areas; they had been more exposed to the individualizing process of the norther exploitation system and its context. Thus, hunger for land was as strong as among Zapata's people, but they tended to express it through other productive options. Even their anarchism was not that of the villages, dealing with internal problems, concentrated on their own life, trapped by the localism. It was the vague anarchism of a people lacking experience and notions of organic integration as the origin of social existence, and who join others from personal defencelessness, linked to them for not much more than the shared exploitation. And this last point was not the foundation for solidarity through which the proletariat achieves its transformation into an organic force, that is, it tended to propitiate the reinforcing of individual and family development. It was like the reinforcing of cells which are interdependant but constantly claim their fierce independence.

Villa often said that he dreamt of finishing his days on a small *rancho*. He was killed on one. He hoped for small plots of land for his men, each of them having his own cows and chickens. But like Zapata, he was not a man for government. The stubborness of his agrarian claims, the profound and popular response to his committment, and maybe the uncontrollable nature of a force which was inca-

pable of recognizing it as such, made it impossible for him to be accepted by those who were trying to constitute a government along constitutionalist lines. Villa's agrarian law, published on June 7th, 1915, only six months after Carranza published his, in order to reduce Zapatist strength, had very little ideological influence on the revolutionary process. It was promulgated after the Northern Division had been completely defeated, and before Villa could express his ideas on what he would do if he won. All that remains of these ideas is what he agreed upon with Zapata.

Villa's movement has provided material for intense discussion which continues even today. Whatever his role might have been during the revolution, it is still possible to trace his influence in those small holders who hang on fiercely to their plots of land.

Their numbers, however, are not precise. It is difficult to separate them from other rural protagonists and agents who have already taken over from them. Empirical research has proven that there are, in fact, very few of them. And that their number is decreasing.

COOPERATIVES

Some of these small holders have grouped themselves into cooperatives in order to survive, and express themselves through, what in the long run, is only proving to be the prolongation of their agony.

This is not the most appropriate place for a description of the Mexican history of cooperativism (which has a special place in this country). The cooperatives, which have to be included here, originated through the grouping together of small holdings, using some common elements in the productive process or carrying out together commercial or other types of activities. Division of labour and its uses are individual decisions taken as a result of complex interaction. This interaction divides collective committments from autonomous decisions of individual cooperative members.

The fundamental framework within which these institutions develop, includes the relation between technological and input needs in order to be able to collectively confront the market or financing sources. The different ways of combining resources as well as the different ways of facing the contradictions between individual-family accumulation and that of collective committments, give rise to emergency processes of internal differentiation, which place cooperative operations under tension which leads to their disintegration. While some seem to, or really do, advance towards the characteristic behaviour of a capitalist enterpreneur, others tend to assimilate themselves into the wage-earner context.

Theoretically, the cooperativist outlook could be the basis for col-

lective organization, which would place small holders in a different historic and social perspective. And, in fact, this has happened in some cases. But, in general, the outside pressures of disintegration, are added to yet another basic limitation which blocks their development, that is, the initial drive comes from small holders who see the cooperative system as a way of extending rather than denying themselves. Each of the cooperative members tries to "utilize" it for personal and direct benefit. Because of this, its success is always circumstantial and transitory: it carries within itself, its very source of destruction.

Some cooperatives have developed along strict capitalist lines, that is, they leave aside the cooperative and self-management mechanisms which strictly speaking could define them, and in their place use mechanisms of discipline, hierarchy and profit division based on economic participation. Their success or failure has been related to their size and dynamics: some of them have even evolved toward higher forms of mercantile societies, which in turn become any one of the protagonists later described; others have retreated to their original situations, reconstituting the small holdings from which the attempt arose.

In spite of the periodic support that the cooperatives have received from the government or other social forces, they have not been able to come up with one specific productive form of any great significance for rural Mexico. They tend to join forces with other protagonists, thus sharing with these their determinants and ways of being.

RENTIERS

Undeniably a left-over from previous structures or a marginal product of new processes, the rentier leads a polyfacetic existence, peculiar to rural Mexico. Sometimes, he represents the impoverished existence of Porfirian *latifundistas*, at others he represents the absent expression of the small holders or even *ejidatarios*, who have tried other occupations or fortunes outside the rural context.

To maintain this character in perspective, he has to be distinguished from others, who are in fact more linked to the wider practice of illegal leasing of plots of land, as a mechanism of capitalist expansion in the Mexican context. In the latter case, the owner of the rented plot of land forms, in various ways, part of the logic of the capitalist system, i.e. hiring himself as a *jornalero* on his own land, carrying out the productive process on behalf of others, under pre-established commercial conditions, etc. Because of this, he will be described in the following chapter, since, strictly speaking, he is a rural worker, that is, a protagonist who depends on his own labour force for survival, even though the "right" to do this —the employment guarantee— is based on the usufruct of the plot of

land. In contrast to these workers, the rentier is an agent who uses his title deeds as a specific source of income.

Some members of this group find themselves in a peculiar situation which practically excludes them from it. For example certain *ejidatarios* or private *minifundistas* who depend on other activities for their labour-income, i.e. trade handicrafts, etc., retain the plot of land and its rent as a "return guarantee" in case their efforts in other fields fail. So the rent is not really conceived of as such and in fact is often merely symbolic. On other occasions, the owner of the plot of land rents it in order to increase his income from other sources and to accumulate capital which will allow him to eventually cultivate the land again himself, with more chances of success or development, precisely because of the investment of the capital accumulated.

Since they stand completely outside the overall logic of the evolution of the Mexican agricultural sector, the rentiers advance towards their own extinction. Legal procedings are taken against those who do not work their plots of land, regardless of the size of these. The application of the law is far more rigorous in these cases than against those who use the leasing of land as a way of placing themselves within the general functioning of the system.

ECTOPLASMS

> Ectoplasm.- . supposed viscous substance exuding from body of spiritualistic medium during trance // (biol.) outer layer of protoplasmic content of cell other than the nucleus.

CACIQUES

"See this fine gentle humid land... It's good land, I swear it is!.. But next year things will be just as bad, 'cos we're in the hands of *coyotes*, intermediaries, *agiotistas*, and *tiendas de raya* owners, who sell sacks of ammonium sulphate at 75 pesos when we know it only costs 37 pesos. And the same goes for insecticides and fumigating agents. It just isn't fair. And then they try and convince us what wonderful people they are, 'cos they lend us all the money we need at 8 or 9% monthly interests, taking the crop in payment. So the crop already belongs to them, long before it's even harvested." (Agustin Torres, 39 years old, *ejidatario* from San José de Chuen, 12 kilometers from Ario de Rosales, Michoacan, January 30th, 1975).

"In spite of everything, the *caciques* in Hidalgo have continued with the support of gangs of riflemen, the invasion of *ejidal* lands in 28 communities in the Tepehuacan Municipality in Hidalgo, where terror

and violence are every day events. This was denounced before the provisional governor of the State by members of the Cuatolol *ejido* They accused both Francisco Austria Cabrera (colonel and lawyer) who comes from a family with one of the longest traditions as *caciques* in the region, but which supposedly had been wiped out long ago, and also Ismael Martínez Angeles, who is *cacique* Austria Cabrera's deputy. Some years ago, they said, Austria Cabrera gave possession of the *ejido* to the members of his gang, as well as to some *terratenientes*. These people have threatened us, ambushed us, persecuted us, imprisoned us, robbed us, perjured us, and even killed some of our group. Nothing of course has been done to them". (Ultimas Noticias May 15th, 1975)

"In the Tuxcueca *Ejido* in the village of the same name, in Jalisco, there is a *cacicazgo* which has lasted for 30 years, during which over 60 people have been killed. The first accusations were made 22 years ago. During the present government, the *campesinos* have received more than six telegrams from the Presidency of the Republic, acknowledging receipt of their accusations. Nothing of course has been done... The leader of the *ejidatarios*, Anastasio Bejar Díaz, named Leopoldo Sosa Gómez, a former *comisario ejidal*, José Sosa Orejel, who had been municipal president as well as a *comisario ejidal*, José Sosa Barba and Zacarías Cárdenas Valdovinos as the *caciques* who have taken illegal possession of hundreds of hectares, killing *campesinos*. The last of the *campesinos* is still in jail. The leader explained that some of them have up to 140 hectares while there are *ejidatarios* with only one and a half. The *cacique's* area reaches as far as San Luis Soyatlan, as well as other villages along the Lake Chapala shores." (Excelsior, May 12th, 1975)

"Merchants, influential people, bankers, industrialists, and even a former President of the Republic have taken illegal possession of more than a half the 160,000 hectares of the Cabo Corrientes *Ejidos*, a municipality in one of the Jalisco's richest seashore strips. One of the *caciques*, Alfonso García Castillón, knew that sooner or later his lands would be affected, so he decided to give them away to those in powerful positions in order to protect himself. Antonio Zepeda Pacheco, municipal president and *comisario* of the *Ejidos* Union 'Alfredo V. Bonfil', informed this newspaper that García had given almost half of his 42,000 hectares to 120 name-lenders. 'El Tuito' is the name of this dusty town, located at the foot of the Sierra and 43 kilometers from Puerto Vallarta. "Before, nobody was interested in these places, they said, but now that the road between Puerto Vallarta and Barra de Navidad has been opened, everybody wants the land". He then added "García Castillón illegally took over 42,000 hectares when Nabor Estrada died and he was the most important *latifundista* in Cabo Corrientes. Now we have applied for land for the Las Juntas de los Veranos *Ejido*, and this affected El Carrizal, which belongs to García Castillón, so he immediately tried to find a way of protecting himself. For the time being at least, he has managed to prevent this endowment from taking place. Some time later he took over 20,000 hectares more; this means he now has

a total of 62,000 hectares which belong to the Indian communities and *ejidos* of the municipality. Later, García Castillón simulated a land-division project and divided the land up into 21 parts. He's distributed these among his own *mozos* —who never had access to the usufruct of the land— as well as to rich merchants, bankers and industrialists from Guadalajara, so that they will defend it for him. He gave half of his *latifundios* to a lawyer called Urzua, who has since distributed it among others. But I'd rather not give their names because I know they'd do something to me". (Excelsior, March 28th, 1975)

One can make a bet with absolute certainty that there will be a daily news item in the Mexican press on similar accusations about *cacique* attacks. No sociological study on rural Mexico can omit this character from the rural scene.

Who is this agrarian protagonist? It is possible to go way back in history and find, for example, the Fat *Cacique* of Tlaxcala who helped Hernán Cortés, the Spanish conqueror in his campaigns against the primitive Mexicans. And it is also possible to keep track of him through the most differing periods and circumstances.

Today's *cacique*, however, has very concrete origins. Because of all the given legal restrictions and the socio-political context within which rural capitalist expansion took place, a significant portion of the participants in this process used corruption as indispensable mortar with which to build the modern economic apparatus. And the agent used to produce and handle this mortar was a protagonist whose obviously villanous profile had very little to do with his capacity as the star of the show, i.e. the *cacique*. Doubtless, he is the world's worst "agricultural manager": he neither organizes nor participates in production. As part of the intermediary economic structure, between the rural community and the "rest of the society" his role is one of extracting resources from agriculture. But just as he is incapable of stimulating rural productive forces, he is also the worst urban manager. His urban "investments" merely serve to reproduce the predatory scheme which initially gave him power.

In spite of this, or probably because of it, the *cacique* is a key agent in the economic functioning of the Mexican agricultural sector. The *hacienda* had been destroyed as a productive unit and the *ejido* had been incapable of taking over at the appropriate time its collective exploitation, so the *campesinos* had no other choice than to develop the individual or family-mode of exploiting their plots of land. So the *cacique*, who originally had often been an authentic agrarian leader at the head of the struggle for land, became a cohesive element in the productive effort, able to control it but not organize it.

Initial exploitations took on several characteristics: the successful use of his own land, the operation of buying and selling centres, available supplies, his relationship with the outside world as well

as many others. Eventually his activities spread like cancer throughout all areas of community life. He was equally capable of obtaining for the community either state funds or police repression. In the same way, he either financed crops or bought them, he would sell consumer goods; he would pay wedding or funeral expenses and organize religious festivities. He was incapable of revolutionizing productive forces because, among other reasons, he operated from an illegal, violent basis with doubtful political representation. Any permanent investment in the land carries with it inacceptable risks. His "investments" even in agriculture had to be on a short term basis, extremely short term, sometimes even hardly that of an agricultural cycle. He prevented the *campesinos'* accumulated economic surplus from being invested in productive improvements, by taking it from them or diverting it towards consumption. Even when it was actually in his hands, he did not use it to any productive purpose but used it to extend his own activity, in order to consolidate his economic and political power, or make conservative investments in urban centres.

As a structural agent in the functioning of rural communities, the *cacique* was also a linking agent with other social groups which determined "from the outside" what happened on the rural scene. This is where both his strength and his weakness can be found. He is effectively an articulating agent, subordinating producers to the sphere of capital, but without any genuine life of his own, and with no economic force to ensure his expansion. Although he is a vital link in the chain of relations between the true protagonists of the productive process, he does not really take part in this process, increasingly depending on the managerial structure which employs him as an intermediary.

A very important factor in the appearance and persistence of *caciques* is the lack of real integration throughout the country. To the ethnic and cultural plurality which divides Mexicans among themselves, even as far as language is concerned, one also has to add the total isolation in which large sectors of the rural population lived until very recently, and in which some sectors still do. The *cacique* was the linking agent who fulfilled an ambivalent function of integration-disintegration.

Many *caciques* persist because of their specific reproductive process: the old revolutionary politics which allowed them to develop the material basis of their economic power is used to increase their political position and this, in turn, allows them to extend their material basis of operation. Some of their functions are related to the manipulation and control of *campesino* communities in order to guide them along the political lines laid down by the government. At the same time, together with direct coercive mechanisms, the *cacique* also becomes a quasi-political representative of the *campesino* group, in order to solve specific problems and obtain, among other things, state funds.

The speculative nature of management prevails in their economic activities. Their actions do not permit true integration into a productive structure which of itself, ensures the accumulation of capital in the strict sense of the term: they buy and sell land, rent plots of land, cultivate, from time to time land obtained as credit guarantee, use "private armies", and even the police to invade or control land, etc. By using both, their own resources and those obtained from official credit institutions, they are able to impose their own usurious credit practices, thus bringing to heel the bulk of the *campesino* population, most of which (75% in 1970), has no direct access to the state or private institutional credit.

Nevertheless, the *cacique* no longer fulfills these objectives. He arose from the heart of the rural world, but has been left in a gap in the functioning of the global system of production. Unless he were able to genuinely change his character, and become an authentic rural or urban entrepreneur, he will remain little more than a physical representation of the true forces which move the system. He has been a useful and sometimes necessary tool but increasingly less and less vital to the dominating structures. He has carried out the "dirty work" of others, as well as the paternalistic tasks of those economic agents who guide the process needed to correct the existing contradiction between legal standards (and their socio-political context), and economic reality.

Under the critical conditions of recent years, their role seems to have increased, as it has been necessary to use direct domination, when political formula for negotiation, manipulation and control have been exhausted. But even this is only the result of appearances. Once the real forces involved in the crisis have to come face to face, the shadowy fiction, which tends to cover up the real economic and social relationships in rural Mexico, ceases to be of significance. The intermediaries thus lose importance, and their ambivalence becomes meaningless.

RANCHEROS

These are found in the most unlikely conditions. They are just as likely to be found trying to break the bank in Las Vegas, as enjoying life to the full on their land, or helping their favorite mare to give birth, or acting as a doctor to the cowhands, or with tie and all sitting behind an impressive ministerial desk, preparing a speech to be delivered before an international audience.

Obviously they prefer dealing with cattle raising, but can just as adequately dedicate themselves to fruit, vegetable, grain or any other production. As cattle raisers, their general ways of behaviour are very similar to those of the *neolatifundistas* (who will be described later); as farmers they follow the lines of agribusiness,

agroindustry, rural enterprise or agrocommerce, according to the agent with whom they are directly associated.

Their source of origin varies. Some arose from the dreamt of expansion of small holdings which, thanks to strong capitalization, become profitable, without going beyond the legal limits of their property. Others had urban origins, i.e. banking, government officials, politicians, businessmen and even employees and workers. All of these had some sort of leaning about having a *rancho*, as a status symbol and a way of getting into regional or national elites. In these cases, it is no rarity to find that the *rancho* is non-profitable enterprise, and represents a permanent expense for its owner. Or rather its profitability originates in the use of staff and resources of state institutions, in which the *ranchero* appears to work or to which he has access. But even here, the *rancho* is not, strictly speaking, a source of income or power, but an expression of the political or economic power which he already holds.

In general, the *ranchos* can be described as medium capitalist exploitations, according to their size, the capital amount with which they operate, the degree of employment of wage workers, and the volume of production. When they operate under this logic in the area of cattle raising, their activities are closely tied to the extensive practice of breeding calves for export. Thus, they have been largely responsible for the links between the cattle fattening business in the states which border the U.S., where most of their production goes. In these cases, their main economic activity has kept them closely linked to the commercial capital which controls exports. This relationship has also given rise to different ideological and cultural ways of thinking, especially with regard to consumer habits and attitudes towards life which have been assimilated through this kind of contact. Recently their extensive cattle raising activities have been modified through the adopting of semi-intensive patterns, by fodder cultivation aimed at obtaining fatter animals in less time. In certain regions they have combined raising bovine with other species such as, for example, porcines. In tropical areas, they have dedicated themselves to grazing calves (raised on *ejidos* and communities), fattening them in natural or artificial meadows. Their main link with the internal commercial system (which has recently been opening up to the exterior), allows them to add to their own productive activities, those of intermediary between *campesino* producers and commercial or industrial meat chains.

Certain *rancheros* behave in their "own" way, i.e. they represent a stage between the "independent" small holder, and the large capitalist enterprises. In this way they exaggerate even more the pioneer image, that of the "self-made man". In general, however, the *rancheros* <u>are</u> ectoplasmatic characters, simple emanations of the urban world, expressing their political or economic power through the rural world without actually having it there. They are the physical representation of the economic dynamics of those productive agents which control the global logic of productive processes in the Mexi-

can agricultural sector.

NEOLATIFUNDISTAS

Originating during the Porfirio Díaz period, temporarily blocked by the Revolution, and then expanded during the modernization process which has developed since 1940, the *neolatifundista* is a symbol of the continuity of an economic and political process which resisted attack from the *agraristas* and found fertile channels through which to develop a project of capitalist expansion within Mexican agricultural sector. The creation of large irrigation systems, opened up the possibility of speculation with rural land, for former Porfirian agents, who had been hidden in a thousand different ways within the revolutionary regime, and who were now mingling with the newly powerful families and urban dealers.

Once they came in contact with land which had increased its productive potential (because of the new irrigation systems) without yet needing immediate large capital investment, their vast hunger for land control was awakened. The initial process was anything but innovative with regard to technology, i.e. the rapid process of accumulation basically depended on the amount of land they were able to occupy or control. This they did in many ways: they registered several "fractions" of land under the name of different members of their families; they used *prestanombres* (name lenders) from the people within their sphere of influence; the direct or indirect leasing of private or *ejidal* plots of land. Their access to credit and their ability to obtain state investment funds, gave them a privileged position compared to that of the *campesino* producer, who lacked resources and support.

The accumulation of the initial years resulted from the above mentioned improvement mechanisms. Since the 1970s, they began to react to the stimulus of fixed high prices for their crops, and they made investments which opened the way for technological innovations. These developments however, corresponded more to pressures from the organizations in charge of promoting development than to a genuine "innovative mentality": in reality, many years of frustrated efforts by technological and assistance agencies were needed for the objectives of those efforts to be effectively assimilated by these agents.

These facts accentuated even more their hunger for land. While they tried to intensify the handling of their plots, they also tried to widen the productive scale of their operations, with the argument that technological resources should not be restricted to the "limited" field of their plots. In this way, they projected throughout the country an image of keeping up with the times, as well as the idea that they formed the only group capable of ensuring the food

supplies for the population.

The *neolatifundista* benefitted most from the Green Revolution. His accelerated process of accumulation was based on extensive land control. Recently a variety of factors have led him to undertake mechanization (sometimes excessively) and this is causing changes in crop cultivation patterns. Although he originally dedicated himself to fruit, vegetables and cotton production, he now turned to wheat production as well as other products, during the biggest expansion period, in order to take advantage of the official guaranteed prices and other state incentives. He still, although without having yet left these lines of production, increasingly adapts himself to market needs within the established global cues of agribusiness. In the long run he increasingly depends on this for survival and concrete ways of functioning. His highly irrational consumption (which has been given as an example of his wastefulness) has engendered a close relationship with national and multinational financing and commercial systems which in turn, progressively impose their productive guidelines on him.

RURAL ENTREPRENEURS

Although they often emerge from the *neolatifundista* group, rural entrepreneurs differ from this in the diversification of their commercial and financial activities, and even in their initial processing of agricultural produce. Thus their own rhythm of accumulation acquires very differentiated characteristics, i.e. as a *latifundista* he is helped by resources obtained from financing and commercial systems.

The rural entrepreneur soon became linked to the distribution sphere of industrial inputs needed in agriculture, thus opening up prospects. His access to official credit, as an agricultural producer, provided him with possibilities of having a cash-flow which facilitated his commercial transactions. Eventually he used these accumulated resources to ensure his regional function as grain accumulator through financial means. He took the classical route of commercial capital and began to intervene in the productive process itself, by imposing on the producers under his control, the conditions under which the productive process should be carried out. In this way he was able to subordinate the totality of activities related to his own accumulation model.

This same process led him towards a tighter relationship with existing U.S. interests linked to agribusiness throughout the country. His personal field of reference can be found in western North America. From Houston to Las Vegas, the indelible footsteps of his depredatory consumerism can be followed. And it was for this very reason that the real control of his operations was taken from his

hands. Although some still believe or seem to believe that they have real power of decision, the fact is that they have been losing this in the face of the constant advance of those who really guide this process.

PLASMA

> Plasma.- A fairly thick, straw-coloured fluid // one of the basic components of the blood // Plasmar - to mould, to shape // to give shape to something plastic or ceramic.

"The winds continued blowing. The very same winds which had brought the rains. The rains left but the winds remained. The corn patch spread out its leaves to dry and then lay down in the furrows to hide from the wind. By day it was bearable, it twisted the vines and caused the tiles on the rooves to creak; but at night it howled, long drawn out howls. Contingents of clouds passed silently through the sky just skimming the earth."

Juan Rulfo, PEDRO PARAMO

And here, to finalize the description of the Mexican rural protagonists, from the capitalist point of view, we find there is nothing to be described. The apparent reality vanished, only an interplay of shadows remains.

There is, of course, room for conventional approximations. The well-known list of enterprises and managers of agribusiness, whether national or multinational, which always appear as the capitalist personification, could always be included. Their complete names, as well as how many there are and their characteristics, could be given. All this information is being collected by outstanding researchers exploring this phenomenon. The mechanisms for land concentration could be identified along with the buying or merging of capital; administrative council links, as well as data from the stock market. We could easily give the usual descriptions of the high company executives, of the already familiar decadent capitalists, of the many notorious members of the revolutionary family and of the efficient representative of the branches and subsidiaries. It would be almost impossible to resist the temptation to denounce the large octopus, together with its accomplices, hidden business, international pressures...

But it would be to no avail. When one tries to get at the true picture, to those strong, impressive and ever present forces, concrete phenomena slip through the fingers. Once the puppets had been seen

and identified, and their subordination proved, it became necessary to follow the strings which moved them, as well as to locate the hands which were responsible for this. And here nothing is clear. We have to return to the point of departure contained in the balance of the previous chapter: logical functioning can be seen through effects, through its manifestations and consequences, at an abstract level which allows profiles to be drawn and speculation on its character in order to form a hypothesis. The actions of agribusiness cannot be "proved" through a final description merely by adding new figures or intuitions. The "proof of the pudding is in the eating".* The proof of the hypothesis is in change, and this cannot find a concrete field of expression here.

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* In English in the original.

CHAPTER THREE
CAMPESINOS, AGRICULTURAL WORKERS AND OTHER RURAL WORKERS

On December 5th, 1810 the priest Miguel Hidalgo declared that the land should be returned to those to whom it rightfully belonged (the natives). Hidalgo's statements therefore, were to constitute, according to Jesus Silva Herzog, the first agrarian document of independent Mexico. Only three months earlier, the popular movement had arisen which would lead to independence from Spain.

The *campesinos* are the natives of this country. They have always provided the basis for its development and have always been a keystone in any changes which have taken place. Even today, numerically they are the largest group in Mexican society. At the beginning of this century they represented 80% or 90% of the population. And today the ever-increasing urban population is made up of children and grandchildren of *campesinos*.

These facts gave rise to the historically false picture of bucolic agrarianism within which an ever-constant *campesino* played one and the same role throughout history. He has thus come to be seen as some kind of formal entity walking on and off different stage sets, endlessly playing the same monotonous role for different audiences. This fairy tale view was the one which gave the world the picture of the Mexican as an Indian sitting crouched under his hat. It was also responsible, paradoxically, for the *campesino* being denied any historical roots, and for him being seen merely as a puppet of the dominant structures.

In the XVI century, Father Bartolomé de las Casas, the Great Defender of the Indians felt obliged to paint a true picture of the Indian. He did this in his famous "Apologética", therein refuting the idea that the Indian lacked the rational capacity for self-government in a civil manner and within a system of public order. After the publication of the book, and because of it "the American Indian was conceptually integrated as an equal among all social levels within the universal vision of the Christian community". However, because

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of the Aristotelian maxim which states that whatever is superior and better must dominate whatever is inferior and imperfect, the following aphorism was propagated: "civilized nations do not only have the right but also the supreme moral obligation of intervening in the life of barbarian nations. They should use their sovereignty to guide and help these nations not only with spiritual advice, but by imposing upon them, through force if necessary, benevolent and paternal institutions to lead them to the pathways of true religion and civilized traditions." This meant that, although Fr. Bartolomé's work placed the Indian in the social environment of the historical vision of the time, this integration was not seen "as fraternal communion between all men and peoples but as communion taking place under paternalistic Spain banners".[1]

Varying trends of thinking prevailed at different times during the four centuries of colonial rule; trends such as medieval imperialism -like that of the chronicler Oviedo- or modern nationalism, but whatever the trend, the Indians were always an oppressed, colonized people living under the strictest domination. Even though they fought for their communities autonomy, their condition always oscillated between that of a "slave", or a servant.

In 1841, two decades after Independence had been established, a distinguished traveller described the situation of the Indians in the following terms: "There are two classes of Indians: cowhands, who receive 12 pesos a year and 5 sacks of corn a week; and ploughmen known as *luneros* (Monday men) because they have to work on Mondays. When they marry and have a family and consequently need more water, they are obliged to till, sow and harvest twenty *mecates* of corn for their masters (each *mecate* has 24 square *varas*). When the chapel bell rings, all the Indians have to go immediately to the *hacienda* and do whatever work is assigned to them by their master or his substitute. For this they receive one *real* and three *centavos* worth of corn. The authority of the master or his substitute is absolute. They settle disputes between the Indians, punish any wrong doing... the Indians only have to stay on the *hacienda* if they are in debt and being in debt ties them hand and foot... A malicious master can make sure they are always in debt".[2]

Around the same time, a distinguished Mexican, Melchor Ocampo, described the situation of the *peones* as follows: "for working six days a week, *peones* receive 9 *reales*: they spend three on corn, half a *real* on chile, half a *real* on salt, all these being necessities. If four of the remaining *reales* are used for paying a debt, then

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[1] Edmundo O'Gorman, CUATRO HISTORIADORES DE INDIAS, Sepsetentas, México, 1972, pp. 101, 107 and 110.

[2] I.L. Stephen, "Incidents of Travel in Central America, Chiapas and Yucatán", quoted by José Mancisidor in SINTESIS DEL MOVIMIENTO SOCIAL EN MÉXICO, Centro de Estudios Históricos del Movimiento Obrero Mexicano, México, 1976, pp. 13-14.

they would only have half a *real* left for buying meat, thread, cigarettes, fruit, medicine. In order to pay off a debt of ten pesos, giving four *reales* each week, they need five months..."[3]

On December 3rd, 1912, while Emiliano Zapata was fighting for the land in Morelos, Luis Cabrera, together with 62 other Federal representatives, presented the draft of a law proposal. The first article declared "the reestablishing of *ejidos* to villages" to be of public interest. The speech he made defending the project immediately became famous and remains so today. It contains a passionate picture of the situation of the *campesinos*, valuable in spite of the penetrating ideology of the speaker. To quote from it at length will save us many pages of free description. Here then, are some excerpts:

"Things would have been different if the Spaniards had respected the situation they found here at the time of the Conquest and if they had followed the wisdom of Phillip II, by leaving the Indians as they had found them; if they had only founded villages through reducing their numbers. But when villages as such were formed by establishing colonies, the inhabitants would have been unable to subsist, either in Spanish or colonial terms, if it had not been for the *casco* of the *ejidos* and the *propios*. The *casco* circunscribed the limits of that which really constitued urban life; the *ejidos* that which related to the communal life of the inhabitants, and the *propios* have been the source of many important economic phenomena in our country. Anyone who has read any title deeds of the colonial period, must have felt how the fight between *hacienda* and village stands out on every page. In the rural economic battle that took place during the colonial period between villages and *haciendas*, victory was gradually gained by the villages as a result of their privileges, their organizational ability, the effective cooperation learnt over the centuries and above all, because of the vast power obtained through the control of *propios*, as elements of conservation. The *ejidos* secured subsistence for the villages, the *propios* guaranteed the power of municipal governments. The *ejidos* provided peace for neighbouring families nestled round a church, the *propios* represented the economic power of municipal authority for villages, which were nothing less than huge land holding in relation to the *latifundio* known as *hacienda*. This was the secret of how villages were able to survive vis a vis the *hacienda*, in spite of the enormously advantageous privileges of the Spanish land owners during the Colonial period. The *propios* were misused, when it was seen just how far they could be used for mortgaging purposes, But when later laws required the demortgaging of unused land, there was no hesitation in considering the *propios* as a very risky form of mortgaging which had to be destroyed. The situation of the villages compared with that of the *haciendas* was notoriously privileged in the eyes of the 1856

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[3] Melchor Ocampo, "Polémicas Religiosas", quoted by José Mancisidor, OP. CIT.

demortgaging law. These laws, which were applied to the *ejidos* resolved that instead of the *ejidatarios* appropriating the land, it should be distributed among the members of the village. This was the beginning of the end of the *ejidos*, and the origin of the absolute impoverishment of the villages. At the present time, I won't say because of usurpation, although there has been; I won't say because of theft or complicity of the authorities, although there have been thousands of cases, but because of the way in which the *ejidos* were demortgaged, it was obvious that for economic reasons these fell into hands which were able to profit from them. Sooner or later, this distribution was going to lead to the formation of a new *latifundio* with the characteristics of the *hacienda*, or it would become part of neighbouring *haciendas*... ( ) There were some voices heard against the disintegrating of the *ejidos*... ( ) There were not just one or a few villages, there were many which, at the right moment, knew how to resist the disintegrating of the *ejidos*. After the distribution of the land, many of the people began to give their title deeds to the most trusted person in the village. Let's call him the *cacique* in the good sense of the word. This meant that he came to have in his hands all the title deeds, in order to keep and defend village lands, through communal administration, which in fact still continued.

In the State of Mexico, this system was very common and had reached such a state of perfection that cooperative or anonimous companies were formed by all the villagers, in an attempt to return to the communal situation. It was this situation which the law had tried to change through procedures more in keeping with modern tendencies of social organization. This was the only way they found to defend themselves against the extinction of communal property. But obviously it was insufficient, in view of the great attraction of the neighbouring *latifundios* for small land owners. Whatever the reason, either negligence of small land owners or abuse on the part of the authorities, the fact is that the *ejidos* passed almost entirely from the hand of the villages to those of the *hacendados*. Consequently, a great number of villages, at present, have no way of satisfying their most basic needs... ( ) The demortgaging laws of 1856, which did away with the *ejidos*, left no alternative means of subsistence for the villagers. Even though previously they had been able to make their living throughout the year from the cultivation of the *ejidos*, now they became 'de facto' slaves or servants in the *haciendas*. Slavery in the *haciendas* was inversely related to the existence of *ejidos* around villages. Industrialization began to develop after 1884, and changed the condition of the rural classes somewhat, especially in places where there was industrial activity or where they were close to mining centres... ( ) But where these conditions do not exist, the *ejidos* are vital for small villages, and where there are no villages, only vast extensions of land with entire areas occupied by *haciendas*, then undoubtedly slavery exists... ( ). Over the last fifteen years the *hacienda*, in this part of the central plateau, has used two types of servants or *jornaleros*: the yearly contracted *peon*, and the specific task *peon*. The yearly contracted

peon, so-called *acasillado*, is given special privileges over other *peones*, under the condition that he brings his family and lives in the *casco* of the *hacienda* and remains in service there for a year. The specific task *peon* (*peon de tarea*), on the other hand, is someone who comes from time to time to sow or harvest. The yearly *peon* has an insignificant salary, one on which he cannot possibly live, one which would not suffice to feed a mule. How is it possible for such salary levels to exist? Is it possible, theoretically speaking, that a man can live on it? No, it is not possible, but this happens for the following reasons: the *hacienda* can pay or calculate paying for instance, an average of 120 pesos for the four months it needs the *peon*'s labour; this would mean that the *haciendas* should pay $30.00 or $1.00 daily for a good *peon* who would be capable of doing all the yearly tasks. But if the *hacienda* contracts a *peon* and then allows him to leave, it would have difficulties hiring a new one. It has somehow, therefore, to ensure that the *peon* stays in the *hacienda*. This it does by dividing four months salary throughout the whole year, by paying a day's work at $0.31, that is, the same $120.00 yearly salary. Seen in this light, the daily wage of $0.31 is an excellent salary that the *peon* cannot find everywhere. Generally speaking, the yearly *peon* gets $0.25 daily wage. The yearly *peon* has a minimal salary but on the condition that he and his family remain at the *hacienda*. He has a secure job for a year, even though it is at the expense of his freedom and at a daily wage which is insufficient to cover his needs. A salary, in fact, less than the cost of hiring out some poor nag. The owner of the *hacienda*, therefore, pays a salary of around $0.25 daily, that is not enough to fulfill the *peon*'s needs; the *hacendado*, therefore, has to find a way of keeping this *peon acasillado*. If he gets along with the local political administrator, who is usually no more than a servant of the *hacendado*; and if he has access to the army, that tremendous, ever present threat hanging over our rural classes; and if he has a *tlapixquera* to throw the *peon* in when he tries to run away —in fact if he has the power and means— he can have as many *peones* as he wishes and can be sure they will remain there. But when an *hacendado* does not have all the repressive means to hand, then he has to find other ways. He becomes a little more flexible and uses other means for his purposes. For instance: the price of corn, to which the yearly *peones* have the right, constitutes the first complement to his salary. If the price of corn on the market is usually $8.00 or $10.00 this is of little importance, because part of the *hacienda* harvest has been put aside in order to be able to sell corn to the yearly *peon* at $6.00 per *cuartilla*. Half a *cuartilla* is the weekly allowance for his family; this, in itself, is an economic incentive and, in fact, constitutes a small increase in salary, since the *campesino* buys the corn at a lower price and gets it as a complement to his salary; not a very large one, but just enough to ensure that he does not die of hunger. And this is looked upon as a favour on the part of the master towards his yearly *peones*. In areas where *pulque* (fermented juice of the agave cactus) is extracted, another salary complement is given to the *tlachiquero peon*: it is called the *tlaxilole*. This is the portion of *pulque* that at sunset and after sing-

ing praises to the lord, the *tlachiquero* gets to cover his family's needs. He can do whatever he wants with it: sell it, drink it, or put it in what is known as a *panal*, which is the hollowed out stem of the maguey cactus where it is secretly fermented. He generally drinks it or sells it, but, in any case, the *tlaxilole* is a small extra salary for the *tlachiquero*. Something I should have mentioned earlier, which is also a complement to his salary, is the *casilla*. This is the half, third, or eighth portion of a *casilla*, which one of these poor souls gets as living quarters; it is true that the "*acasillado*" *peon* has to share the hard floor he sleeps on with other *peones* or servants of the *hacienda*, in very unchristian promiscuity; but he does have a small section to call home and this is also considered as a complement to his salary. While he is a yearly *peon*, he also has the right to school, on of the rare occasions when he does, but under what conditions? In 1895, when I was a teacher in a *pulquera hacienda*, I was instructed by the administrator —who was not the person who paid my salary because I was an official employee— that I was to teach only how to read and write and the Catechism of the Roman Catholic Church. I was absolutely forbidden to teach arithmetic and especially "anything to do with Civic instruction that you people bring and are of no use!.."( ) Anyway, shool is a small increase in salary, but it is not always provided by the *hacienda*. Next on the list are the credits given in the *tienda de raya*. The *tienda de raya* is not a simple arbitrariness of the *hacendados*, it is an essential part of the economic system of *hacienda* management. It is impossible to think of an *hacienda* without one... ( ) The *tienda de raya* is a place where the *hacendado* gives credit to the *peon* and this is considered as a benefit for the *peon*, but, at the same time it becomes the *hacendado*'s bank. The salary complements talked about before, constitute the *hacendado*'s generosity given to the *campesinos* by his right hand. However, the left hand through the *tienda de raya*, then, takes back any excess salary that the *peon* might have been paid through his corn allowance, *casilla*, and the *tlaxilole*; everything is returned to the *hacendado* through the *tienda de raya*. And the *peon* unfailingly returns it because of the system of perpetual credit, which persists endlessly among our social classes, and even ourselves. It is the economic death of our poor social classes. The most characteristic application in the credit system is the *tienda de raya*, where the *peon* obtains daily on credit what he needs. All the discounts mean that his weekly salary will only amount to a few cents; all the rest is merely a question of accounts. When Holy week comes, the wife needs special petticoats; the children new sandals, and he, a belt or a shirt. Since the *peon* has absolutely no chance of any source of income apart from his daily salary, his only resource is to ask his master for a Holy week loan... ( ) The *hacendado* takes it all in his stride as yet another of his expenses. Even though he does not expect to get paid back, the amount is dutifully written down in the *hacienda* account books under "indebted *peones*". Why, if the *peon* is unable to pay it back and the *hacendado* will not be charging him? Its importance does not lie in the present, but in the future, for

it is the *peon*'s children and grandchildren and their children's grandchildren who will be required to pay... ( ) The three yearly loans would not appear to be salary increments, but they are, in effect, the most insidious of the increments, for they constitute the true chain of slavery... ( ) The indebted *peon* remains in the *hacienda* not through fear or even force but through a kind of fascination brought about by his own debt. He sees as his chains, a mark of slavery, his fetters, this debt written forever irrevocably in the *hacienda* account books. He rarely knows the exact amount of his debt; it might even reach the dizzy height of $400.00 or $500.00. An apparently humane, interest-free, debt, which remains unchanged in the books, until the *peon* dies. Then, the total amount is divided between three or four of his young descendents, who are already working in the *hacienda*. There is one last salary increment which only very special *peones* are allowed, that is the so-called *piojal* or *pegujal*. The *pegujal* is a small piece of land, which hardly consists of more than a quarter of hectare. But the *peon* who has proved himself has the right to sow it. In this way, he can complement his salary with the corn harvested from it. However, he does not reap the corn himself but sells it, often even before harvesting, to his master. He can thus pay off some of his debt or use it for his family needs. The *pegujal* is not granted to any *peon*, only to those who have risen to the status of captain or have become servants, such as house boys or grooms. The *pegujal*, therefore, can represent the beginning of independence for those *peones* who have become *medieros* or tenants. Consequently, it is the most important and interesting kind of salary complement. With the exception of this complement, all the others are links in a chain, which only serve to further enslave the *peon* to the *hacienda*."

Much of the strength and vigour of this excellent description is due to the fact that it was delivered as a spontaneous speech. But also by alluding to other than colonial times, it gives the image and idea of an immutable, unchanging *campesino*.

Father Bartolomé de las Casas' work did not deal with the slanderous assumption that the Indians were not human, rational beings but with that which stated that they were not capable of governing themselves in a civil manner and within a system of public order. But even Bartolomé de las Casas himself, along with the entire colonial population, acted according to this assumption. Even today in Mexico, in daily life, in academia or in politics, many think that the *campesinos* are incapable of governing themselves.

"A malicious master can always keep (the Indians) in debt", remarked that same famous traveller from last century. And the same thing happens today through the *Banco de Crédito Rural*, which is not without its own rogues; or through the *caciques* established in each *campesino* village.

The odd phrase could be added to Luis Cabrera's description to substitute those referring to institutions and situations which "up to

date" knowledge sees as things of the past. But the superficial observer would not find many differences between today's *campesino* and the one described by Luis Cabrera. The *campesinos* would thus be mere shadows from history, a left-over from the past, which must be "done away with" as quickly as possible. This image easily slots into common prejudice. It is relatively easy to admit that *campesinos* have made history. It can even be accepted, without too much resistance, that the structuring of modern societies resulted, to a large extent, from their participation. It may even be thought that dictatorships and democracies have been founded on their attitudes and reactions (Barrington Moore). But they have been, and they still are, the damned of the earth (Fanon, Dumont); they are the pariahs of all cultures: they are putty, demolition material, mere rubble. Sometimes they are the amorphous mass to be shaped by other social forces, those forces which apparently are the carriers of social life, as well as the builders and changers of its course. Compared with pharoahs and emperors, mandarins and kings, feudal overlords and landlords, *encomenderos* and *hacendados*, *latifundistas* and farmers, agribusinessmen and modern agricultural enterprises, compared with all of these, elements which view themselves as pioneers of history, deciding elements in the rise, peak and fall of empires, the *campesinos* are —so it is said— a pale, immutable shadow, drifting through history from one century to another, from one continent to another, whose only fate is to adapt themselves, as best they can, to their current master: giving into him, accepting his laws, or themselves becoming masters, as some have tried to do and succeeded. Their resistance, passive or violent, illusory or otherwise, intermittant or persistent has hardly any other option —that is if it is noticed at all— than that of adapting or dying. Even today, as many projects are drawn up to bring about their "freedom" (a concept varying according to different standpoints), the underlying assumption tends to be that they cannot be freed from themselves to be what they are not, and trust that society will be able to give them some other role (today, for most of them, that of the socially marginated). In the latter case, it seems they have to accept being "a militant mass", in alliance with those who claim to be simultaneously both their equals and their guides.

In Luis Cabrera's brilliant speech, he pointed out that he would not have recourse to "the antecedents of this History of Rome, nor the English Revolution, nor the French Revolution, nor Australia's, New Zealand's, or Argentina's, but to the antecedents of the only country that can show us how to solve our problems, the only country that we can imitate: New Spain". And he emphasized: "New Spain is the only country that Mexico can imitate". And maybe he emphasized it so much that notice was taken of him. Some would say that, besides copying New Spain, Mexico has been imitating the Porfirian structure, thus imposing its past on its future. And they will produce figures or data, images or gestures, situations or policies, to confirm such statements. They would even quote those in power who have supported this idea.

But it is important to go beyond appearances. However, painfully similar the conditions under which today's *campesinos* live are with those of their counterparts from the past, they are nevertheless different. We have to take into account the deep, substantial changes, which have taken place among them, changes which cannot always be perceived when seeing or speaking to them. Changes which have, for the better or the worse, caused transformations in their social structure and which have even affected those forces oppressing them. But above all, we must take into account how much they themselves have changed through the dynamics of their contradictions, through the difficult task of interaction with others, through the accumulated experience of the long history of their struggle. It would finally seem that all the "false routes" have been taken. All those routes which led them time and again to waste their energy and resources on solutions which took them nowhere, or on slogans for freedom which were eventually used against them.

Who, today, are the Mexican *campesinos*?

Rodolfo Stavenhagen has summarized some elements which will permit an overall picture:

- If the *campesino* is a tenant, then he has to pay rent in money or in kind; if he is an owner, then he has heavy overheads due to interests, premiuns, and other payments.

- The poorest *campesinos*, who work the poorest quality land, pay a differential rent compared with the rest of the agricultural sector.

- The price of land (or its rent) is higher for the *campesino*, given the monopoly and oligopoly over it.

- Credit is both generally and frequently given at usurious rates, thus leading the *campesino* into a systematic process of permanent debt.

- Modern physical inputs can only be acquired on a small scale at a higher prices than for large producers, because of the structure of commerce and the existence of intermediaries.

- The output is low and the produce, in general, is of low quality, and sold at low prices.

- The productivity of work is, consequently, very low.

- Harvests are sold immediately, independently of market conditions (i.e. they sell, even if the prices do not compensate), to satisfy immediate cash needs or because of inadequate storing facilities. They often sell what they have produced to cover their own needs and then have to buy again at higher prices. Intermediaries, as well as existing monopolies over the market, mean they often have

to sell even below market value.

- Transport difficulties increase the prices of their products even more.

- The family labour force is not assured working in their own holding throughout the year. The level of compensation for their work is lower than that of the rest of society.

- The *campesino* and his family offer their services outside their own holdings, accepting salary conditions below the legal minimum salaries, which do not correspond to their cost of living.[4]

Another estimate points out that 78% of agricultural land does not produce sufficient for the *campesinos'* own consumption and it totals only 15% of production value. On the other hand, 13% of agricultural land provides three quarters of the total production, but employs only 20% of the *campesino* population and, half of this percentage, only from time to time.

Campesino units of production are found all over the country, but mainly in the states of Durango, Zacatecas, San Luis Potosí, Jalisco, Michoacan, Morelos, Puebla, Oaxaca y Yucatán.[5]

In areas where other forms of organization of production exist (Chihuahua, Sonora, etc.), most of the *campesinos* land is located in arid or mountains regions, that is, in the most inhospitable areas, often with poor quality agricultural land.

Specific characteristics of some of the main protagonists on the agrarian scene, can be distinguished from this overall description.

MANAGERS AND EMPLOYEES: THE MASTER'S VOICE

These characters do not fit exactly into this chapter, but they have to be included here because they receive a salary. However, their objectives, interests and ideology would have made them better suited for the previous chapter.

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[4] Rodolfo Stavenhagen et al, CAPITALISMO Y EL CAMPESINO EN MEXICO, INAH, 1976, pp. 20 - 21.

[5] Kirsten A. Appendini, and Vania A. Salles, "Agricultura capitalista y agricultura campesina en México (diferencias regionales con base en el análisis de datos censales)", in CUADERNOS DEL CES, No. 10, El Colegio de México, México, 1977, p. 22.

They are the "confidential workers" of *rancheros*, cattle raisers, farmers and agribusinessmen, who hold managing, administrative, or service positions. They receive a salary throughout the year, as well as different kinds of compensation. These compensations vary from a share in the profits, if they have powerful administrative posts, to being provided with board and lodging if they are *peones* cowhands, or domestic servants. Some of them also have the equivalent of the *pegujal* and work available pieces of land, either directly or through tenants or salaried workers. Occasionally, they are able to become "independent" and integrate themselves into a different rural or urban social group.

Those who make up this minimal segment of the rural population, virtually always act in their master's name and interests. Since they identify themselves with controlling capital, they usually have difficulty in identifying with other workers and their relationship with them is often antagonistic. In many cases, it is tenser and more aggressive than that between the master and the other workers. Their work occasionally consists of finding and directing "rural guards", those who take care of the dirty work of controlling certain regions.

"GOLONDRINAS"

These destitute people wander from place to place, either within the country or abroad. It is impossible to calculate their numbers correctly, precisely, because of their wandering existence. From time to time, some empirical research comes across them, but they soon slip through the researcher's fingers. They are the dramatic clochards of rural Mexico, prisoners of their own miserable freedom, dragging their way through a goalless, usually short life, except in cases where fortune smiles upon them and keeps them in one place. One of them, a prisoner in the Islas Marías, was able to cultivate a piece of land and walk through the streets. He was serving a long sentence for murder and said with no regrets, "Here I feel freer than on the mainland. There I do not even have a village to go to".

The "*golondrina*" seem to be people expelled from their own community because of some social or family crisis which led them to break all contacts with them. They offer their services as day workers in the fields according to harvesting needs, or go to towns where they are prepared to work doing just anything. Their lack of initiative or spirit of adventure, results from some kind of melancholy or aggressive resignation which led them to cut all ties with either past or future. They carry their home on their backs. They live from their own resources, hiring out as labourers or resorting to crime. If no unexpected "redemption" arises, like having a stable opportunity for a job, or a girlfriend who will tie them to one place, they will vegetate and die as imperceptibly as they appeared.

One estimation has put the number of this group at 1'200,000.[6] But this number has obviously been confused with that of a group we will talk about later: that of *jornaleros*, who roam from one agricultural exploitation to another, often taking their families with them and never losing contact with their home villages. The true "*golondrinas*", who have broken these links, appear occasionally in census in the slots and regions where they happen to be at the time, but statistics are unable to give precise details of their numbers. Some data, however, indicate that their numbers have increased: data such as the cruel disappearance of many rural communities, which have literally been wiped from the map, or the proliferation in villages and towns of those the authorities consider to be "undesirables". They form the dregs of Mexican society, politically neglected and a constant remainder of the course of its evolution.

FARM WORKERS

There is another small group which must be mentioned. This is made up of permanent, salaried farm workers, with formal work relations in specific places. Their numbers are small because the demand for them is limited to relatively few units of production: generally, in capitalized areas with very specific products, or paradoxically, in areas where traditional economy prevails. Although many exploitations need workers, they tend to contract them to perform specific tasks for limited periods during the year. In this way, they avoid contracting obligations and hire only the required numbers.

These farm workers are similar to industrial workers in as much as their relation to their objective class condition and their attitudes are concerned. However, they seldom receive similar contracts. They rarely receive individual job contracts or employment at the minimum wage. This results, among other factors, from their lack of negotiating capacity and the fact that they are so dispersed, they are unable to organize themselves. Their numbers, however, do not have very much bearing on the total.

A recent survey stated that 12% of the employed rural population was made up of salaried permanent workers: some 800,000. Officially this group corresponds to that of the farm workers. However, certain empirical research projects have questioned this estimation. They ascertain that in many *campesino* exploitations, the salary one of its members receives, is an important element for the functioning of the exploitation. This obviously implies deep and integral interactions between the salaried worker and those who are not, which

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[6] Francisco Schnabel, "Vivienda transitoria para trabajadores migratorios", in VIVIENDA, INFONAVIT, México, 1978.

sometimes, implies a transference of value from the boss to his employee and not viceversa.[7]

In the analytical context of this book, farm workers are defined as those who are completely disconnected from the *campesinos* exploitation, and whose reproduction, as well as that of their families, comes exclusively from selling their labour. Many of them, in the same way as industrial workers, take upon themselves a large part of their reproduction cost (they build their own houses, make their own clothes and domestic implements, etc.), or they receive them through public services. In spite of this, they have lost their authentic productive capacity, for their activity does not generate in itself either profit or consumer goods for others; it merely produces in order to cover their own needs. In this sense, even though they possess their own tools, they lack means of production. Consequently, it could be thought that the actual number of farm workers is less than it is, and that they are scattered, given the non-existence of large concentrated capitalistic units of production because constitutional stipulations. A large number of these workers are found in exploitations where no more than five permanent salaried workers are employed.

CAMPESINOS

Most of the rural population of Mexico comes under this heading. Their common characteristics are few, although enough to distinguish them from other social groups: they depend basically on their work for subsistence and reproduction. They maintain a special relationship with the land, either directly or indirectly, and they are integrated —albeit seemingly weakly— into a community structure, the outer signs of which are social or superstructural, although these indicate an economic basis of organizational functioning. Any attempt at generalization beyond these characteristics, only further emphasizes their heterogeneity. However, within the framework of this book, it is possible to present some subgroups under this heading, without losing sight of the fact that the members of each subgroup share the same general characteristics presented above. Before describing these groups, perhaps some of their common characteristics should be studied in more detail.

First of all, the dialectics of the contradictions characterizing present day Mexican *campesinos* must be explained: on the one hand, they depend upon their own work to subsist and to reproduce their standard of living, and, on the other, they maintain a special rela-

[7] Marielle P. L. Martínez and Teresa Rendón, "Fuerza de trabajo y producción campesina", in COMERCIO EXTERIOR, Vol. 28, No. 6, June, 1978, p. 663.

tionship with the land. This contradiction, seen in its strictest terms, is what separates the Mexican *campesinos* from their own past, as well as that of other people, while at the same time defining them as a class and their differences with other groups within the same class.

Work, in this sense, is not equivalent to effort. Throughout history *campesinos* have survived by relying on their own efforts and on creative energy capable of transforming nature and of producing objects to satisfy their own needs and also those of their oppressors. Work in this case is productive work, which in a capitalist context, means the capacity to generate profit for capital. The *campesinos*, as well as the industrial or service workers, are subordinated to capital along the lines of the logic described in the previous chapter. This subordination does not always mean, however, being tied up to capital in concrete productive activities. Neither does it necessarily imply being tied up to it in the terms of a worker—capitalist relationship, materialized in a salary on the one side, and in the duties subjected to discipline and hierarchy, on the other. *Campesino* subordination to capital generally means, in fact, being part of its logic, that is, functioning in such a way that the results of their productive process become their own reproduction process as well as a profit for capital.

The other side of the dialectic condition of the *campesinos* existence, is the special relation they have with the land, as an important part of their relation to capital, or rather, of the specific relation of capital with them. Capital cannot (and very specifically does not want to) take care of *campesino* reproduction. And it does not have to, as it does in the case of the industrial and service workers, for the *campesinos* take on this responsibility through their own ways. This has nothing to do with the problem of unemployment, a "natural" condition in modern capitalist societies, related to the so-called industrial reserve army of the unemployed. What it deals with is the specific form this relationship takes on.

On the one hand, capitalist production in agriculture should not and cannot, in the terms of its own logic, cover the annual salary of the worker since it only needs him part of the year (Luis Cabrera has already foreseen this). On the other, capitalist processes are centred on activities not directly related to production itself, either because it prefers it this way (due to profitability), or because it has to prefer it that way (due to the socio-economic context). Agribusiness, as we have already seen, is centred on the control of the productive process to ensure control over industrial, agricultural and cattle raising inputs. The risks of crop production must be undertaken, by the direct producer. Capital merely guides the productive process, leaving the technological patterns untouched, in the initial stages of intervention. In this case, it works from the "outside" as a conditioning and determining factor, and can therefore, intensify the productive activity, although it is not concerned about transforming it. However, agribusiness tends to

radically transform the productive process itself in order to subject it to its own patterns both to create the need for its own inputs, and to adopt the produce to the form and needs of its own requirements, while remaining on the "outside" of direct production.

The relationship between agribusiness and the *campesinos*, frequently follows tortuous paths through an increasing number of middlemen and other people coming between them. This does not deviate greatly from basic capitalist logic, the main tendency of which is to disassociate the workers from their means of production. The *campesinos'* situation on the contrary, confirms this tendency since this disassociation has generally already taken place. What happens is that the land and the instruments of work do not function as means of production, in the strict sense of the word, for the *campesinos*. They are merely the space of the condition within which his productive activity materializes. In fact, the strength of this link with the land generally means that his usufruct guarantees the materialization of his productive activity, a guarantee he would not otherwise have.

This phenomenon results of course, from the fact that according to the Constitution of the Republic, the ownership of all land corresponds to the Nation. But it also results, above all, from the fact that the usufruct of the land, which gave rise to the different forms of land tenure, has been encroached upon by capitalist evolution. In Mexico, capital has a <u>legal</u> limit for its direct access to agriculture, since law prohibits commercial capital participating in the exploitation of the land. There is also a <u>political</u> limit, indicated by the presence of the *campesinos* and their struggle to be heard. Consequently, agricultural capitalists only get to be what they are, through the illegality of open or simulated *latifundios*. Since the judicial system of the country rejects the entrepreneur structure of exploitation and restricts the hiring of permanent salaried workers, capital is obliged —and in this way adjusts to world norms— to operate from "outside" the productive process. This is generally done through openly illegal mechanisms which allow it to direct and subordinate this activity, accordingly to its own logic. "The form of land tenure —Rodolfo Stavenhagen has said—, has not yet been an obstacle for the development of capitalism. Capitalism has, in one way or another, total control over production".[8] Gradually, land tenure (or usufruct) has become simply a form no longer associated with specific types of social relations. The *campesinos* appear to be direct producers, "dressed" according to the tenure structure: they can be *comuneros*, *ejidatarios*, small holders, small *minifundio* owners... Their relationship with capital —understanding capital as a relationship— does not necessarily take the form of salary, even though they are workers at the service of capital.

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[8] Rodolfo Stavenhagen, an interview in PROCESO, No. 81, June 19, 1978, p. 9.

The link with the land produces yet another dialectic game. On the one hand, the *campesino* is guaranteed being able to channel his productive activity. Since this is subordinated to capital and acts within the framework of its logic, this means that the guarantee for subsistence is related to the capacity of acting within this framework. To lack this capacity means risking, in real concrete terms, subsistence on a daily level. On the other hand, however, the link with the land provides a way of belonging to a socio-economic structure which guarantees a stable condition for subsistence: the rural community. While it is true that being able to fit into the framework of capital logic is the conditioning and determining factor of *campesino* life, it is also true that this is a fleeting, volatile requisite for survival. It can be destroyed at any moment and only offers insecure, reversible guarantees because of the demands made by this very logic. The other guarantee is lasting and stable; it has resisted the passage of time and the worst of natural and socio-economic hazards. The community appears as an indestructible force of resistence, even when it functions as the "beseiged fortress" referred to by Arturo Warman. It is true that daily, many villages come in to being, while others die; and that the organization process continues its unchecked march forward. But the fact is that rural communities, those with less than 2,500 inhabitants, have remained surprisingly stable over recent decades.

A slight disgression is required here if rural Mexico is to be fully understood. Like the *campesinos*, the rural community is a "way of life" which appears to have been the first kind of human settlements and perhaps the least studied. Its origin and personality have aroused both, interest and mistaken opinions. One mistake, for instance, has been that of trying to trace back in history, the supposed antiquity and strength of present communities. This again has resulted in the myth of "primitivism" being put forth which confuses instead of clarifying present reality. In the name of history, real history is denied. "The past is frequently lost for those who do not analyze it carefully, establishing it in the seemingly immediate present on an anachronic, disused block of time". The "urban eye" with its ethnocentric shrouds, approaches a qualitatively different reality and cannot see it. Those who live within, cannot talk about it either because its very organization and consciousness "are hidden in the individual live of those who dwell in it: sensitive reality is as secret as it is immediate".[9] City dwellers are prone to consider people from rural areas as gossips. But we are the gossips. For them, talking about somebody else means talking about themselves; in their shared reality, no one is foreign to anyone; a comment on a neighbour is an act of introspection.

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[9] Henry Lefevre, "Problemas de Sociología Rural: la comunidad rural y sus problemas histórico-sociológicos", in DE LO RURAL A LO URBANO, Lotus Mare, Buenos Aires, 1976, pp. 19 - 20.

The rural community has form but this does not merely refer to appearances. If we do not look to history for the different content this form encompasses, through both static and yet changing dynamics, we shall never be able to discover it. The fact that it persists, in the same way the family does, under the most heterogeneous conditions, in totally different periods of time, separated by history or geography, and the fact that it remains, disappears, reappears under different production systems, means that it is an organic entity with strength and dynamics, rooted in history, and in legend, constantly reproducing and transforming itself. It has a past from which nothing remains yet everything is felt. We cannot take as it was. We cannot see its present reality as a residue product or a strange left-over from the past. We have to stand outside our rigid framework of prejudices which tends to characterize our analysis of rural life. The North American rural communities were the product of urbanism, since those who built them, in a social vacuum, had escaped from cities. North American sociology, that of tradition-less country, has painted a cosmopolitan image of rural communities that has very little to do with their actual reality. This image seems to have permeated virtually any analysis we make of the subject.

The rural community "is not a productive force nor is it a mode of production... ( ) it is a kind of organic community which cannot be reduced to the sum total of its individual elements... ( ) its relation cannot be exhausted through its land tenure relationships since it is also made up of collective rulings which are extremely flexible according to their circumstances and strength... ( ) This gives us the elements for a definition of a rural community (a *campesino* one): it is a form of social group organizing, according to historically determined characteristics, a set of families tied to the land. These primary groupings have on the one hand, collective or individual wealth, and on the other, "private" wealth from varying relationship, but these are always historically determined. They are ruled by collective forms of power and assign —even when the com_ munity keep to itself—, responsible leaders to direct the implementation of these taks of general interest.[10] It's certainly true that "nowadays *campesino* life lacks autonomy. It cannot develop according to its own laws, in many ways it is related to the general economy, national life, and modern technology". But it also is true as Lefevre pointed out thirty years ago, that the *campesino* community can spring up again in modern times, according to the modern needs and on a modern basis, it would be a fascinating rebirth and perhaps from it a new dimension over the earth".[11]

The rural community as such is not a productive force nor a mode of

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[10] Lefevre, OP. CIT., pp. 26 - 31.

[11] Lefevre, OP. CIT., pp. 37 - 38.

production but it is inextricably related to the ways of labour organization. When conflicts arise from the development of productive forces, specifically during capitalist expansion, its disintegration is planned in the classic way. The advance of capitalism in agriculture, apart from appropriating productive and natural resources, has also demanded the "individualization" of the rural workers, their radical separation from the means of production and from the social relation tying up their lives. The organic nature of the community means that individuals exist within it in as much as they are differentiated from it. It is precisely these differences that form the group and through which its cohesion is developed. Capitalist development needs to erradicate this social form of existence, because in order to function it require the homogeneization of individuals. It needs to produce human atoms immersed in the mass, with each of them establishing new ways of social relation with the economic agent which allows the process: the capitalist. Some of the "individualized" *campesinos* are absorbed into industrial work as a part of this sequence which increases social enthropy, opening up thus, the way to the possibility of chaos. The organic relationship among themselves is limited and disrupted, it is transformed into mechanical solidarity within the productive unit and can only be reconstructed in the long process of integrating the new group. It starts in the way dictated by labour unions, until the new group emerges through organic solidarity, in a class organization. The rest of *campesinos*, those who remain in the rural areas without "proletarianization" in terms of the classic sequence constitute the rural communities. But they generally remain under conditions that do not respond to their historical characteristics. Mechanical solidarity is often prevalent over organic solidarity which has been broken down by social and productive transformation. In this way the definition of rural community given by Kolb and Brunner can be understood as an example which clearly contrasts with the previous one presented above. They define it as "the interaction of people and their institutions on a local level", this interaction results from a kind of individualism which is continually exacerbated —in pace with the substantive homogeneization of individuals and the growing disintegration of links which they had with their community. The individual has been alienated from his community and clings to what he has while at the same time changing his traditional values for those given to him by the impersonal forces of the market, through the mass media. It is this social context that gives origin to the traditional conservatism of the *campesino*, but simultaneously it also is the background against which all the prejudices towards the *campesinos* flourish.[12]

[12] It is not only a case of prejudice. The modern criticism to which Barrington Moore refers is populist rhetoric, which only avoids any real content. This process of individualization is an irreversible and universal fact, although levels and goals varying according to context. The appearance of "lonely crowds" (in the sense used by Riesman) is a fact which has to be taken into account. Gustavo Esteva, "Movimientos Campesinos y Política Nacional", in CUADERNOS DE DISCUSION, CENAPRO, No. 2, 1978.

This classic sequence of events, however, has not generally occured in Mexico or in many other countries. The social forces that initiated the disintegration of rural communities did not see this disintegration through to its end. As soon as the *campesinos* realized that they were not being offered a new framework of social relations within which they could subsist and develop, their reaction was one of survival and of resistance to the change which only seemed to be leading them to their own extinction. The organic strength of their communities provided them with a concrete option, that is, gave them a guarantee for survival that they could no longer get in any other way. However, this strength was seldom strong enough to encourage development because external pressures remained that blocked their possibilities of accumulation. The existence of this kind of solidarity at the heart of many rural communities may mean that new options for rural development can seriously be considered at this moment in history. It means that the conventional "proletarianization process" (the transformation of the direct producer into a salaried or unemployed worker) is not a fatal or inevitable event: neither, of course, is it the only way for capital or for the workers. It also means that the inherent irrationality of a process, such as the capitalist process, which needs to break down society into individual elements in order to reintegrate these very elements is not an inescapable process. It means reality can be transformed through the drive towards development which can be found in this organic strength instead of going against it, trying to dissolve it and inciting fruitless social conflict. When the salaried worker becomes aware that his contradictory situation with capital cannot be overcome by his status of a "free" worker, his only alternative is to integrate himself into a long process of promoting organic solidarity, first within his own productive unit, and then within his own social class.

The *campesino*, however, at the start already has a social organization from which the capitalist system has not as yet been able to disconnect him. This organization can be used once he becomes aware of the economic contradictions that result directly and immediately from the political climate of the real conditions under which Mexico is developing.

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

The degree and type of solidarity found in rural Mexican communities show, in fact, great heterogeneity. It is important to distinguish the community structure which developed on the basis of Indian tradition, and which resulted from later colonization processes. The Mesoamerican remains found in the central and southern regions of the country, literally constitute forms of social organization, living and organizing bodies, which give rise to "individuals" who progressively break away —although never completely— from these organic

bodies as emanations of an active social substance. In the northern part of the country, however, patterns similar to those from North America were adapted, that is, "individuals" or families who were already constituted as such, coming from different places with varying characteristics, gathered together in a common, relatively open space. The unification results —as in other communities— from mutual help against both a hostile environment and common enemies. But the lack of pressure for land tenure, characteristic of long periods of colonization, encourages the formation and strengthening of socio-economic differences between the members of the community who for some time merely share the physical space of the community. (An obvious exception, of course, is the Indian "enclave" of the Yaqui, Maya, Tarahumara and other tribes, although even here one can see differences compared with the ethnic groups in the central and southern states.)

Another perceivable difference is found in the legal form of land tenure, which in some cases, offers modern legal systems, within a clearly defined historical reality and in others, offers new ways of social existence, arising from a variety of experiences. Within this diversity, *ejidos* and Indian communities, agricultural and cattle raising groups and villages have to be distinguished.

EJIDOS AND INDIAN COMMUNITIES

The term *ejido* began to be used in Mexico as an extrapolation from an old Spanish institution. It was the term the conquerors were most familiar with, when they tried to adopt Indian organizational traditions to their own requirements. The original structuring of the *ejidos* in Mexico is, therefore a *mestizo* achievement, the long Indian history of which has been transformed by Spanish domination. It represents a triumph for the Indians, since it meant their recognition by the Spanish Crown and the obtaining of their title deeds. But it was also used as an instrument of domination over them, since the *ejidos* were incorporated into the colonizing institutions.

During the colonial period and the first years after Independence, the *ejido* was the key element in the constant struggle between communities and *haciendas*. The liberal laws of the *República Restaurada*, which affected the confiscated church lands also affected the communities. In answer to these abrupt losses, the communities tried throughout the Porfirian dictatorship to reconquer their communal properties. This led them right up to the beginning of this century to the situation described by Luis Cabrera at the beginning of this chapter.

The first years of the Revolution are characterized by a process of reconstitution of the *ejidos*. For Luis Cabrera and others who share his line of thought, this was all there was to the matter. The *ejido*

would be a parallel and complementary institutuion to the *hacienda* and to the small holdings. Here the *campesinos* would be able to put to their own use any periods of unemployment as salaried workers on the *haciendas* or small holdings. It was to be, therefore, a transitory institution which would gradually disappear in the face of economic expansion. The 1917 Constitution, which gave the nation ownership over the land also entrusted it with the obligation of endowing land to *campesinos*. It thus paved the way for giving *ejidos* great institutional importance, as well as great historical density. Even though many years pass before this endowment comes into effect, according to which new centres of population would be created (already in existence in the case of reconstituted *ejidos*), such an action has a clear legal and constitutional inception and deep sociopolitical roots. In Lázaro Cárdenas' time, the *ejidos* occupied as much as half the land under cultivation. In a now famous dispute, Cárdenas defended his agrarian policy as a direct consequence of the Mexican Revolution that would bring about the autonomous existence of the *ejidos* as a form of production. Luis Cabrera, on the other hand, argued that what Cárdenas was doing constituted a novelty; that it was an invention of "today's" revolutionaries since "yesterday's", those who actually fought in the Revolution thought, that the *ejido* would merely be a mechanism for complementing the *campesinos'* means of subsistence.[13]

The present day *ejido*, therefore, results from the constitutional declaration which establishes that "the centres of population which lack or do not have sufficient land or water... have the right to be given these from neighbouring properties, although small holdings under cultivation will always be respected". The reconstitution of *ejidos* follows the lines of communal legal deeds although they are no longer known as such. The *ejido*, thus becomes a product of an agrarian policy of endowment or expansion.

Strictly speaking, *ejidos* have, just as communities, a legal character and internal mechanisms of decision. These are the General Assembly made up of all *ejidatarios* and *comuneros* with full power of decision and the *Comisariados Ejidales*, the *Comisariados de Bienes Comunales*, and the *Consejos de Vigilancia*, all elected by the Assembly. The provisional or definitive endowment of land to *ejidos*, or the expansion of these, can only have legal validity, however, if a representatives of the *Comisión Agraria Mixta* or the *Delegación Agraria* is present. This enables direct government intervention in internal *ejido* matters.

Ejidal endowment grants social rights of usufruct over the land, and is always the result of community struggle. The *ejidal* configuration, however, is based on "units of *ejidal* endowment" which are in-

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[13] Blas Urrea (Luis Cabrera), "La Revolución de entonces (y la de ahora)", in VEINTE AÑOS DESPUES, Ediciones Botas, México, 1938, pp. 240 and following.

dividually distributed. This fact gives rise to permanent friction between the two trends in *ejido* organization. One fueled by the necessity for dividing the *ejido* into small plots, similar to those of small property holdings and the other by the need of collective organization for the exploitation of the land. The latter respects the title deeds which grant the right to the usufruct of the plot of land, but changes them into guarantees of participation in the productive process and in the distribution of profits according to decisions taken by the *ejidatarios*. In fact, the degree of integration of *ejido* functioning varies greatly: from total division into individual disarticulated plots to total collectivization (that sometimes even reaches the level of *Ejidal* Unions). A whole range of variations can be found between these two extremes, from compact groups of differing sizes and characteristics to total or partial collective organizations which undertake specific tasks within the productive and commercial processes.

Indian communities have a legal character, similar to that of the *ejidos* but their historical basis gives them legal and explicit preference in the agrarian policy of endowment of land they have owned (Article 199 of the *Ley de la Reforma Agraria*). The restitution of lands expressly respects "the title deeds of land and water redistributed according to the law of June 25th, 1856" (the only section of communal land property still valid according to Law).

In Indian communities, formal legal structure often run parallel to how things are actually organized, according to ethnic norms. Once a community has been able to exercise its autonomy from the political and economic authorities on both national and local levels, formal official duties tend to coincide with community responsibilities of those involved in the internal social life of the communities.

At the present time, there are some 25,000 *ejidos* and communities, occupying approximately 95 million hectares (more than 15 of which are in the hands of Indians). The *ejido* and Indian community population (including families) is of approximately 18 million. This figure represents three quarters of the total rural population and one quarter of national population.

AGRICULTURAL AND CATTLE RAISING COLONIAS

These are hybrid institutions, created in the 1940s as an alternative to the *ejidal* and communal structure. The *colonia* grants private usufruct over federal property to those who promise to fulfill the *Reglamento de la Colonia* once they have plots of land for agriculture or cattle raising. The *colonia* expressly stipulate that "no *colono* has the right to prevent any other *colono* from peacefully enjoying his solar, plot for cultivation, or any other hired or titled land. Consequently the size of these cannot be changed and

any trespassing will warrent sanctions being taken" (Article XII of the *Reglamento General de Colonias Agrícolas y Ganaderas*). It also stipulates that "the *colono* must support government efforts to increase agricultural and cattle raising production while at the same time promoting harmony both, within the *Colonia* and among the *campesinos* of the area" (Article XIII).

After a good start in the 1940s, the agricultural and cattle raising *colonias* have not progressed because of a basic inherent contradiction. Those who form part of an organic structure which give a social content to their struggle for the land, usually opt for *ejidal* or communal agrarian endowments. Those who possess means for acquiring land, with individual title deeds, opt for small holdings. In this latter case they are not restricted by the *Reglamento General de las Colonias* which imposes limits, although it does also give some guarantee of immunity to land expropriation. It is still interesting to note, however, that this *Reglamento* establishes that the *colonos* can either cultivate their plot or "direct its cultivation" (even though they do not intervene directly in it). This is substantially different from the Zapatist principle which states that the land belongs to those who work on it. Here, what is being openly recognized is that "owner" can be an entrepreneur rather than a worker. Even though this principle is frequently violated on small holdings and even on *ejidos* and communities, it is only in the *colonia* structure that it is explicitly permitted.

At the present time there are 784 agricultural *colonias*, occupying 7.5 million hectares. Together with these, and also on federal land, there are about 300 thousand *nacionaleros* whose situation has still to be legalized. Arguments and political conflicts arise from time to time as to the best way to resolve this legalization, whether as small private holdings, *colonias* or *ejidos*.

Over the years, and in a few cases since their foundation, a few of these *colonias* have acquired a certain organic solidarity with the *ejido* or communitary structure. Others have remained at the level of a kind of mechanical solidarity similar to that of private and disarticulated *minifundios*. Yet others have been integrated into the organic solidarity of the villages in which they are located.

VILLAGES

These are defined as circumscript territory with its own legal character, whose destiny and fate is linked to the heterogeneous and changing situation of the *municipio libre*, a basic institution in the country's republican way of life. The *municipio libre* reflects the constant latent contradictions between the forces of federal centralized power, and those that intend to use the *municipios libres* as a pivot or focal point for the redistribution of economic

and political power through a process of descentralization.

Many villages came into being as part of the *ejido* and community reconstitution process, and the creation of new population centres resulting from agrarian policies of endowment and expansion. In many of them, one or more *ejidos* or communities still make up the central nucleus of their organic structures around which the rest of the village gathers. In other cases, however, such as those where villages came into being through the processes of colonization, or merely through concurring together in the same physical space, the *ejido* has lost that agglutinating capacity.

Besides the *ejidatarios* and *comuneros*, private *minifundistas* also live in the villages. One million heads of family have received about 83 million hectares (almost as much as the *ejidatarios*) for their own private usufruct. Some of them use their legal tenure to become one of the agrarian protagonists described in the previous chapter. The rest operate under conditions similar to those of the *ejidatarios*, sometimes with smaller and inadequate plots of land, which they cultivate individually or in cooperatives which manifest the same variety of levels of integration as the *ejidos*.

A group which is tied to the land but which has not yet been mentioned is that of the *avecindados*. These cultivate the land under many different systems of land tenure, as a result of individual or collective arrangements which the communities accept, even though these are not covered by any legal definition. Also, there are those, such as merchants, craftsmen, domestic servants, etc., who do not work directly in agricultural or cattle raising activities.

The villages operate within the limits of their legally established power. In some areas, such as Oaxaca, these directly coincide with those in the municipalities. The *caciques* are decisive cohesive elements, even if as previously mentioned, they do not actually participate in the organization of production. Civil servants developed capitalist exploitations —in their myriad forms—, school teachers, priests and others, all have similar roles in the social structure.

At first sight the villages appear as class structures, authentic, reduced societies with corporative traditions and tendencies, especially evident in areas of concentrated Indian population. However, recent *campesino* behaviour, especially as the agricultural crisis intensifies, has given rise to the hypothesis that the community itself has taken its own specific organization, within a class context in each of the villages.

Many Indian traditions entail social procedures, which prevent individual accumulation. The *sistema de cargos*, for instance, deprived them of their "savings" and even leaves in debt those who have managed to obtain them. The weakening of these traditions or the strength of capitalist expansion, however, has created class differ-

ences in the nucleus of rural communities: their own authorities, leaders or others become *caciques* or acquire economic power over the rest. In such cases, even when these people retain their positions within the community, as well as their formal identity within it, this represents a process of community reconstitution in which these people are marginated, often behind their back or even against them. The strength of class definitions determine organized behaviour. This is obviously related to class interests so that rural communities only retain some of their characteristics within a class context. Differences are established between this kind of organization and that which officially or apparently makes up the village.

WAYS OF INSERTION INTO THE LOGIC OF CAPITAL

These community structures, dependent on their own labour for production and reproduction of lifestyle and with strong bonds to the land, manifest generalized, consistent *campesino* characteristics. The way they insert into the logic of capitalist accumulation, which defines forms of exploitation, allows for further typological comments.

AGRICULTURAL JORNALEROS

A substantial number of *campesinos* (perhaps more than half of the economically active agricultural population) hires itself out regularly for temporary work on other agricultural exploitations or in a variety of urban or rural activities. This is done for periods which range from one day to six or eight months and, in some cases, perhaps for several years.

Some authors consider that the *jornaleros* should be treated as wage-earning workers, whose situation, in this sense, is the same as that of agricultural or industrial workers. In this way they would fit into the classic process of "proletarianization". To support this argument, some estimations have been made of the quantitative importance of salary wages for the total income of the *campesinos*. These calculations have been made by giving monetary value to their non-wage income. It has also been pointed out that many *jornaleros* travel for long periods throughout the year with their families, looking for those areas which need to hire labour to harvest the crops. (These workers, as previously mentioned, are thus included among the *golondrinas*.)

Other studies, however, have shown that wage income makes up a substantial part of the logic of the *campesino* economy and this, in turn, part of the wage system. It is important for several reasons to differentiate between these workers and truly salaried ones. As

previously mentioned, capitalist exploitations cannot and are not interested in absorbing the total reproduction costs of these workers, who are only hired as long as they cover part of these costs themselves. Secondly, the income obtained through the hiring of the labour force is part of the context of belonging to a community group. This income becomes part of the logic of its functioning. In this way, this income contributes to the reproduction of operating conditions at the service of capital. Moreover, wages sometimes constitute a peculiar procedure of accumulation which in some cases gives them a transitory nature, especially when they are obtained for a long period or their magnitude is large. This means, that on an individual, family or community level, conditions are created for a process of development which for a time at least, gives the producer a certain autonomy. The labour force, then, is just another merchandise —not the only one, nor the most important— which the *campesinos* risk to safe-guard the production and reproduction of their life-style. Their integral insertion to capital through many different mechanisms, determines that their relation to capital be manifest in the context of the circulation process. Besides they appear to be of a mercantile nature (producers concurring freely to the market) but in reality, they are relations of production which identify them as workers at the service of capital, hidden within the shrouds of direct producers. If this means that the exploitation to which they are subjected is worse, it also means that because of the relative control of resources which characterize it, possibilities are opened up for negotiating as well as for fighting and expanding, as the last few years have begun to make evident.

The *jornaleros* without land ("*campesinos* with special rights" according to the *Ley de la Reforma Agraria*) seem to fit more closely into the category of salaried workers rather than that of *campesinos*. However, unless they are *golondrina* who have broken all ties with their communities, the *jornaleros* remain part of their communities through diverse economic and social mechanisms. For some of them, a wage is a way of getting land; survival is generally obtained through genuinely belonging to a group which assimilates them into its patterns of economic functioning and "takes care" of them when they are unemployed, helping them to stretch out their meager income through internal distribution mechanisms.

For these reasons, *jornaleros* should be seen within a temporal dimension of *campesino* life and not as a characteristic that differentiates two social groups. It should also be recognized that this phenomenon creates constant tension with wide ranging consequences, within the *campesino* daily life. It is a fact that the *jornaleros* make up a large part of the rural migrants settling in the cities. For them, at least, obtaining a wage was not encouragement to stay in rural areas and improve their exploitations. Quite the contrary in fact. It led them to abandon rural exploitations and look for a new destiny in the cities. (However, the growing difficulties in the cities have opened the door to a process of "*recampesinización*" through which the migrant returns to his rural roots, after a long

period of time in the city.)

Gil Victoria, a campesino from Atlapuco, in the State of Mexico, illustrates an extreme case of today's prevalent situation. "He was born a *campesino* and has no desire to cease being one. But twice a week, he walks a few kilometers to the highway where he takes a bus which in two hours takes him into a contaminated industrial zone of Mexico City. There he works a 24 hour shift in a piston factory, after which he returns to the mountains to work for a couple of days on his plot of land before going back to work another shift at the factory. This work as a salaried worker does not earn him more than a thousand pesos a week, but this bridges a vital gap for his family's well being. It means the difference between an annual income of less than five thousand pesos and one of more than 50 thousand; between rags and clothes; between a diet of corn *tortillas* and one which includes meat two or three times a week." Gil Victoria feels satisfied with his situation in comparison with that of other *campesinos*, who never leave their plots of land. "It's not that I feel so tied to the land" he explained, "but the closer I am to the city, the harder it becomes for me to feed my family". Gil Victoria is planning to expand his exploitation with the savings he has obtained as a salaried worker. He has already asked the community to allow him to work a piece of uncultivated land. Gil's older brother, Angel, has settled in a depressing *barrio* of Mexico City, where he lives a wretched life. For him, however, *campesinos* are dormant beings in a hopeless situation: "they don't really want to change and never will". But for Gil Victoria, being a *campesino* means having a real future: "I want to stay here on the land and I want my children to live here. I don't want them to go to Mexico City where there are already too many people. Someday they'll all have to return to the land or they'll sofocate".[14]

In many *campesino* families, the place of a wage is taken through craft or commercial activities. In some extreme cases, when the market situation is favourable or craft skills open up new perspectives for development, the *campesino* may even abandon his plot of land or rent it until he officially or actually loses it. But generally, craftwork is a way of complementing *campesino* subsistence -either at a family or community level. The same thing happens with forest exploitation, mining, cattle raising or other activities.

Special attention should be paid to the *braceros*. As many as a million *campesinos* year after year go up to the south of the United States (and sometimes to the north and even as far as Canada) to hire out temporarily as *jornaleros*. This phenomenon has a long tradition and is a permanent thorn in the relations between the two countries. The "illegal" situation of these migrant workers lends

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[14] An interview with John Huey, in THE WALL STREET JOURNAL, November 22nd, 1979, p. 1.

itself to tremendous exploitation. Studies have shown that a large proportion of these *jornaleros* are the most capable *campesinos* and those with most initiative in their communities. They have found this to be a way of improving their living and production conditions but at the high cost of frequent mistreatment, danger and humiliation. Although *braceros* come from all over the country, they come mainly from medium-level development exploitations from the central and northern states.

"INDEPENDENT" PRODUCERS

Many *ejidatarios*, *comuneros*, *colonos*, *nacionaleros*, private *minifundistas*, tenants or *aparceros* clearly appear to be direct producers through the individual or "independent" exploitation of their plots of land. At first sight, it seems that as well as having the usufruct, they also have the capacity for decision over their exploitation, their traditional technology and pure commercial relation with other economic agents. Whether they work as temporal *jornaleros* or not, they seem to maintain a certain relative autonomy in their agricultural activity. For some authors, these exploitations correspond to the simple mercantile mode of production which they consider to be linked to capitalist production and subordinated to it. Others see in them similarities to the French paysan or the German bauer, if not with the American farmer, and they imagine that because of the restrictions on the free transferring of land ownership as well as on its concentration, these factors cannot, which otherwise would, give rise to the agglutinating process characteristic of the agricultural development which has taken place in the more advanced countries. For many others, these producers have been left so far behind simply because of the lack of one or several of the conventional factors for development: capital, education, technology, organization, etc.

Empirical studies, however, have proven that the so-called "free" access of these producers to the market falls within an interplay of social relations which have placed them deep in the logic of the capitalist system, in accordance with the dynamics described in the previous chapter. Their accumulative economic surplus is systematically transferred, through different mechanisms, to other agents who also in turn, determine their productive decisions as well as the conditions under which they perform their activities through multiple mechanisms.

COLECTIVADOS

The tendency to fully insert labour into the logic of capital is al-

ready present in the "independent producers". But it finds its most obvious expression in those who are collectively organized. In some cases, collective organization of production has been the product of *campesino* initiative or the product of the efforts made in Cárdenas' time. In other cases, it is the result of actions taken, especially in the 1970s, through which both, government and private companies promoted collectivization of the *ejidos* as well as the cooperative organizations of private *minifundios*.

In certain cases, the collective organization of production and commercialization has undoubtedly opened the way for autonomous *campesino* development. It has enabled them to strengthen their capacity for retaining their accumulative economic surplus, as well as increasing their possibilities for negotiating with other economic agents. In general, however, collective organization has tended to function as a mechanism for subordinating labour to capital, adapted to the specific condition of the socio-political context. Here in effect, the *campesinos* retain their title deeds over the land as well as official autonomy for decision making on the productive process and on labour organization. Decisions are taken in assemblies and the diverse requirements of self-administration are fulfilled. Actually, however, these are mere tokens actions.

Decisions are taken externally often by State enterprises or private agribusiness (the former tending always to function as intermediary for the latter). These normally take decisions on production and define in "commercial" terms the producer's income, which has to function as the equivalent of a wage. What and how to produce; how the land is to be used; what inputs are to be used and when; how to overcome plagues, diseases and how to harvest; when and to whom it is to be sold; etc., etc. All these are decisions taken outside the collective organization, which are merely ratified through assemblies.

The reality, and above all, the prospects of Mexican *campesinos* are areas which are still wide open to research and historical practices. We now know that they are not left-overs from a remote past, and that there is no way they can fall into the classical pattern of capitalist agricultural development. The trends established by modern multinational agribusiness on a world scale have had repercussions on a highly dynamic reality which has shown continually its creative and innovative capacity.

A recent empirical study on the *Unión de Ejidos Emiliano Zapata*, in the east of the State of Morelos came to this conclusion: "The analysis of *ejidal* organization challenges the structure characterized by the existence of relations between independent owners who clash

mutually as producers: the relation between those who occupy land and make up the labour force with those who only control the labour force; between seasonal *jornaleros* who own land and *jornaleros* without land; between the process of labour generated by family division of labour and the social division of labour; between wage-earning and non-wage earning labour. An analysis of these relations and a classification of their impact on *ejidos* goes beyond the scope of this study but it is a study which has to be done".[15] This kind of study can only be done if the global impact of multinational agribusiness is taken explicitly into account.

To sum up, the Mexican *campesinos* possibilities, are obviously linked to their capacity for making their common objectives heard through a consciously organized body, capable of expressing itself politically. Their economic, social and political organizations have generally arisen from heterogeneous forms of social existence. This makes their organic global articulation very difficult, especially when it has to face obstacles and opposition at both, the structural and superstructural levels. This means that, as well as a clearly defined political programme to help overcome the traditional prejudices *campesinos* have had to face, there has to be a sharply defined interplay of alliances. It seems that in these terms a ray of hope is beginning to show itself. As the President of the *Unión de Ejidos Emiliano Zapata* in the east of the State of Morelos has said: "What it boils down to is that those who are worse off, are those who have joined forces with us. The others are only taking advantage of us. But a time will come when things will have to change".[16]

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[15] Clarisa Hardy Roskovan, "La Unión de Ejidos Emiliano Zapata en el oriente de Morelos (perspectivas de una organización económica independiente)", in ORGANIZACION, LUCHA Y DEPENDENCIA ECONOMICA, Editorial Nueva Imagen, México, 1978, p. 191

[16] Quoted by Clarisa Hardy Roskovan, OP. CIT., p. 192

CHAPTER FOUR
CROPS AND REGIONS

CORN

Little remains to be said about corn in Mexico which has not already been said, for the history of corn is, to a large extent, the history of Mexico. Corn is related to religion, money and culture, as well as being a staple of Mexican diet.

Corn has been cultivated on this continent for more than 5,000 years. Its first name, Teocintli, underlines its divine origin (Teol - God, and cintli - corn), and from it comes the name of Teocinta, the forerunner of today's corn. Teocinta is a perennial plant whose recent localization in the north of the state of Jalisco, Mexico, has provoked passionate debate, as well as research projects, which may radically modify future agricultural practices.

Nowadays, more than 10 million people are involved, in one way or another, with the cultivation of corn. Almost half the land under cultivation is used for corn, which represents almost a quarter of the total value of agricultural production. Over the last 15 years, production has fluctuated at around nine million tons per year, while consumption has tended to rise mainly due to population increase. This meant that, from 1965 to 1971, almost five million tons were exported, while from 1972 to 1977, 7.4 million tons had to be imported. The importation of three million tons has been envisaged in order to satisfy 1980 demands.

Over the last decades, corn production has come under heavy discussion, both because of its relevance to development conditions in the agricultural and cattle raising sector and also because of how it affects the *campesinos'* role within the global model. Important periodic campaigns for promoting its cultivation have been instigated, only to be followed by objective tendencies and concrete efforts, to prevent its cultivation.

Unlike other corn producing countries, Mexico basically produces it for human consumption: three fifths of the total. 35% never reaches the market, 20% is directly consumed by the producers and 15% is alloted to animal nutrition or seeding. More than 40% of the total demand (internal production as well as imports) is used for the manufacture of *tortillas* and the rest is converted into other foodstuffs or used as raw material for other products. Internal production difficulties, along with other factors, have meant that consumption per capita has decreased from 200 kilogrammes to 156 kilogrammes over the last 15 years. Predictions for the 1980s, suggest that demand will rise with the population increase, but that consumption per capita will remain at about 150 kilogrammes per annum.

Only 10% of corn producing areas use improved seeds. Almost 80% of the producers still use primitive agricultural devices. Four fifths of the plots of land used for corn cultivation by *ejidatarios* or private *minifundistas*, consist of less than 10 hectares and 90% of the surface area destined to corn cultivation is under seasonal use, that is, more than seven million hectares. Only half the irrigated corn cultivating areas under irrigation are fertilized, and only one fifth of lands under seasonal use. The spring-summer harvest, which is sown between March and August and harvested between September and January, accounts for 90% of the total production. Five states (Guanajuato, Jalisco, México, Michoacan, and Puebla) produce 50% of the total and another four (Veracruz, Chiapas, Tamaulipas and Oaxaca) produce 20%, in spite of the fact that corn is cultivated in every state of the Republic. Even though high yields have been achieved by using improved varieties, or irrigation or after a good season, the national average is still relatively low: just over 1,200 kilogrammes per hectare.

Apart from *tortilla* production (using *nixtamal* dough or corn flour), the industrialization of corn is restricted to only a few products. While in other countries corn is used as raw material for more than 800 articles, the "damp milling" process found in Mexico is used only to produce liquid and solid glucose, caramel colour, starch, dextrine, fecule, honey, oil and a few other products. Only 5% of the total available grain is directed towards these products.

One fifth of the two million corn producers, do not produce enough grain even for their own consumption, which means they are also corn buyers. This is the poorest sector and is predominantly Indian. Another 40% produces only enough for its own consumption. The role this group plays in the market is marginal, that is, when occasionally a modest excess is produced, or when immediate necessities require the selling of reserves, although these have to be later reacquired at much higher prices than the original reserves were sold for.

Official policies supporting corn producers have been directed mainly towards commercial aspects: guaranteed prices, storage facilities and auxiliary services. According to the expansive model set

for commercial agriculture, in the 1950s, guaranteed prices, which were higher than international prices, encouraged production and even resulted in the 1970s in excess for export. In 1963, when a new guaranteed price for corn was set, it was stipulated that this should be considered as the *campesino*'s wage. But, this price was frozen for the next ten years, while prices of other crops increased, in accordance to the requirements of the global model, which demanded that rentability conditions for commercial farmers and stability for urban wages be maintained. To reencourage corn cultivation this policy was reconsidered in the 1970s, but an increase in guaranteed prices would have to face a series of contradictions. Any feasible increase in guaranteed prices could not be too high, because given inflationary pressures, prices had to be controlled for the final consumer; but if the increases were not sufficiently high, then commercial farmers would have no reason for reverting back to corn production, by giving up other more profitable crops. The fact is, that the logic of subsidies, which had been given in increasing quantities in order to overcome this limitation, cannot drive out implicit economic rationality. Besides, when the guaranteed price increases, and with it all the other articles consumed by the corn producers, many of them are then forced to reduce cultivation areas and even, sometimes, to give them up. This means that if they are net buyers, then the price increase also increases their financial deficit and forces them to look for other sources of income as *jornaleros*. If they are self-sufficient, since their highest production cost is their own maintenance, then, this measure represents an increase in the cost of production, with the result that their physical possibilities of continuing to cultivate corn become more and more limited, stimulating them to look for other options.

This situation led to other measures being taken after 1973. Once it was realized that guaranteed prices, as a regular commercial device, implied uniform treatment to non-uniform groups, then systems of direct aid for *campesino* producers were applied. To avoid guaranteed prices reaching only large farmers, or the intermediaries who control the *campesinos*, storage centres were set up with *campesino* participation, as well as collective systems of commercialization entailing bonuses which ensured the correct allotment of subsidies. Based on these premises, auxiliary services for commercialization were also provided: sacks, grain threshing, transport, inputs supply, etc. Of particular interest was a consumer credit system, which was established in the hope that it would help liberate the *campesino* from his traditional bottle-necks, and encourage his committment to production.

This approach not only was in contradiction with other more conventional government measures, but it also reflected the existing tensions within the very institution responsible for operating the system, CONASUPO, and between this institution and the *campesinos*. On the one hand, there was a constant tendency to use the government apparatus as a way of intervening and controlling producers in order to subordinate them to the global logic of capitalist development.

On the other hand, it seemed that an attempt was being made to remodel official institutions, so that these would, in fact, back the *campesino* movement towards autonomy which would tend to affect the terms of their relationship with other agents. The progress made in this last aspect may help explain, along with other factors, the wide-spread crisis towards the end of 1976, which coincided with the change of government. It may also help explain the decision, taken at the beginning of 1977, to cancel the policies being followed by CONASUPO, by reducing many of the auxiliary services for the *campesinos*, thus returning to more conventional policies.

The problems arising over corn production are generally related to the overall direction taken by Mexican agricultural expansion, which after the 1940s tended to concentrate more on commercial agriculture, while "giving up" the *campesino* economy, which was left in the hands of agents, who merely tried to exploit it in a predatory fashion. This phenomenon is clearly illustrated by the research and technical assistance policies adopted throughout the period. As previously mentioned, corn was segregated, to a certain extent, from the endeavours of the Green Revolution. Although important research did result in highly productive hybrids, seeds and complementary resources —credits, technical assistance, etc.— these were channelled towards the most developed areas, where corn is cultivated only in a marginal way. Paradoxically, these endeavours have even led to a decrease in corn cultivation, since the technical assistance given has encouraged producers to carefully reconsider rentability and relative costs, which, in turn, has led them to examine other possibilities and eventually adopt them.

Another contradictory aspect of official policy lies in the increasing use of corn as fodder. The need to maintain low selling prices in order to protect consumers by stabilizing urban wages, has led to an increase in the use of corn for the manufacture of balanced diets for cattle.

An overall view makes it evident that a model which concentrates on commercial agriculture while marginating the *campesinos* (mainly corn producers), together with the low rentability of corn (due to controlled price policies), are decisive factors in the crisis of internal corn production. Nevertheless, the implications of the increasing participation of multinational agribusiness in Mexican agriculture must also be taken into account.

Agribusiness is excluded from corn production for a variety of reasons. The producers' real condition makes them unattractive prospects as buyers, and the few needs they have, are catered by State enterprises. As far as their produce goes, it is unappealing to multinational agribusiness. 60% of the total consumption, as previously indicated, is used for *tortilla* production. Most of this comes from *nixtamal* dough prepared either directly by the producers, or in 15,000 small mills, which supply 100,000 *tortillerías*. The very nature of the dough makes its processing on an industrial scale

impossible. A monopolistic distribution would be unprofitable because of the imposed regulations by the *Comisión Nacional de la Industria del Maíz para Consumo Humano*, an inter-ministerial organism which very efficiently, controls distribution. One obvious way in which agribusiness could encourage modernization and control, would be through corn flour production. But this process is under a Mexican government patent, which has been granted to multinational corporations on the condition that it should not be used in Mexico. Corn flour is produced in Mexico by a State-controlled company, dependent on CONASUPO and by a private company which belongs to an economically and politically powerful group. All this means that only a few corn by-products are left for exploitation by multinational agribusiness, and these, for a variety of reasons, cannot absorb any significant proportion of the corn produced.

On the other hand, cattle raising and fruit and vegetable production offer ample concrete possibilities for exploitation by agribusiness. This means a tendency for displacing both, commercial and *campesino* corn cultivation on available land; another factor in this direction is the increased interest on the part of multinational agribusiness to compensate increasing corn deficits, since they completely control corn cultivation in many countries, especially the United States. In the face of this double "disincentive", crisis in corn production was an almost inevitable result of this ongoing process, and it also illustrates the role of State mechanisms in the global operation, especially when apparently unrelated government measures reinforce the process, only to contradict it from time to time when effective aid is given to the *campesinos*.

WHEAT AND OTHER GRAINS

As already pointed out the endeavours of the Green Revolution were basically directed towards wheat. Mexico thus became the cradle of improved grains, which have spread all over the world.

Since the colonial period, wheat has been cultivated throughout the central areas of the country because of the excellent natural conditions found there. The post 1940s modernization trends led to wheat being grown in the northwestern irrigated areas where commercial farmers progressed using the improvement devices already described. However, this process embraced some inherent contradictions. The vast profits obtained from this crop, thanks to State aid, began to diminish as a result of the price-control policy, aimed at keeping consumer prices at a certain level. Although spectacular yield increases meant continued expansion for some time, producers were beginning to familiarize themselves with other profitable crops which gradually began to drive out wheat. Wheat was also affected because it needed a great deal of water and many northwestern irrigation systems were becoming increasingly saline. If the water resources

of these areas are to be regenerated, less wheat has to be grown there in the 1980s and more crops which require less water.

National wheat operations constitute a good example of how farmers are inserted into the logic of capital, through modern exploitation conditions. In spite of strong State intervention, concerned above all about price regulation of certain kinds of bread for the consumer, there is ample room for agribusiness to operate. And agribusiness has been increasingly intervening in agricultural production itself, controlling all aspects of the productive processes and imposing different agricultural modalities through contracts, while at the same time playing a wider part in industrial processing; without participating in the government controlled production of white bread, it has concentrated on the production of wheat-derived foodstuffs, which have decreasing nutritional value; to do this it has had to adjust consumer patterns to the industrial producers' needs and conveniences.

Rice, barley and sorghum are also important elements in grain production in Mexico although they do not cover a significant part of the total of cultivated land.

National self-sufficiency in rice production has been achieved through the participation of commercial farmers and *campesinos*. A good part of the production is controlled by a small group of industrialists who are involved in the processing of the product and increasingly intervene in the financing and control of the productive processes.

Barley is basically in the hands of the *campesinos*, but strongly subjected to control from the beer industry. Even great efforts on the part of this very concentrated industry, to increase yields and extend the surface area under exploitation, have failed to cover the deficit in the production, which is mainly located in central plateau areas.

Sorghum has undergone spectacular increases over the last 20 years, displacing corn from large areas. But, in spite of this, the deficit has also increased. This is related, on the one hand, to a noticeable increase in fodder consumption, and on the other, to the production and commercialization advantages inherent to barley with respect to corn.

Oats are of minimal importance in the national crop structure. But they are of great regional importance in Chihuahua, where they are cultivated by the "Menonites" who have created a peculiar productive enclave in the zone. Less than a quarter of the production is used for human consumption as the rest is mostly used to feed Menonite cattle. The crop has spread to other areas in the State, and a subsidiary of Quaker Oats is trying to encourage its growth in the central areas of the country, in order to satisfy the demands of the internal market.

OILSEED CROPS

The cultivation of these has been concentrated both regionally and socially. Cultivation takes place mainly in the north of the country, using modern techniques, improved seeds, and fertilizers. It mainly provides a source of oil, extracted from sesame, cotton, safflower and soybean.

Sesame production and copra production specifically, have a long *campesino* tradition. Cotton, from which oil can be extracted as a subproduct, has long been cultivated and in the north of the country had important boom periods, both for *campesino* producers and commercial farmers, who channelled their efforts towards the export markets. Two large companies, one Mexican and the other multinational, had a fundamental role to play in the expansion of cotton production. The evolution of safflower and soybean production has shown exceptional progress: from insignificant levels in 1965 to a quarter of a million hectares in the first half ot the 1970s. More than half the total oilseed production is located on *ejidal* lands.

In spite of the increase in oilseed production, large imports have been required for grains, pasta and oil, particularl soybean oil, to be used for the manufacturing of balanced cattle food. This last industry, as well as the oil industry, are closely linked to multinational agribusiness.

FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

The increase in opportunities offered by foreign markets, the U.S.A. particularly, has propitiated an important increase in fruit and vegetable production. Their areas of cultivation increased from two million hectares, in 1960, to 2.7 million today; their value has also increased during the same period from 20% to 30% of the total. There has been a significant increase in yields, as a result of private participation in the supply of seeds and other inputs required.

A recent study pointed out that "the increase in fruit and vegetable production implies the redirecting of land, technology and capital resources from the production of food requirements for the majority of population, towards agricultural produce aimed at the medium and higher income brackets. There are also differences within this type of agriculture. Popular crop consumption does not align itself with the dynamics emanating from the nucleus, induced in turn by the strategies of the multinational companies". These companies have encouraged high value products and more labour intensity both for the export market and for internal sumptuary consumption. Notorious examples of this are strawberry harvests in the Bajío and tomatoes in the northwest, both obviously to serve the U.S.A. market. In both cases the producer faces great risks, from price fluctuations

as well as from U.S.A. policy regarding the importing of these products. Their buyers do in fact finance a good part of the production of the *ejidatarios* in the Bajio and private commercial farmers in the northeast, mainly through intermediaries, processing and packing companies. The high costs of tomato crops reduce the participation of *ejidatarios*. And as far as strawberry production goes, the *ejidatarios* are unable to participate in the substantial profits associated with it.

Market vegetables represent a small but important part of this productive complex. A significant proportion is alloted to the processing industries, the majority of which are multinational. Much of the production is carried out under contract.

Most of the fruit and fresh vegetable production is absorbed by the internal market. A fairly strict monopolistic control of the main commercialization channels exists. In spite of high and irregular prices paid by consumer, the profit received by the producers has not allowed for appropriate technification of the crops.

COFFEE, TOBACCO, SUGAR, AND HENEQUEN

These heterogeneous products are included under the same heading because of the similarities of their productive conditions. In each of the cases, a government dependency virtually has total control over the market. The producers have little land and most of them belong to the poorest sector of the population. In spite of official intervention, international price changes for these products have greatly affected the producers.

A good part of the coffee is cultivated in Indian dominated areas. Many people in these areas do not speak Spanish and there is a majority of women among them. The *Instituto Mexicano del Café* (INMECAFE), a State organism, has increasingly intervened with the idea of opposing intermediary influence, which traditionally controlled the market. A small group of large land owners and coffee exporters, as well as a large multinational instant coffee company, used to control the commercialization channels and a good part of the first hand processing, and through financial mechanisms as well as commercial and technical control, they were responsible for keeping the producers barely under subsistence conditions. At the end of the 1970s, when frosts in Brazil caused tremendous increases in international prices, coffee was the second most important Mexican export, after oil. The same period saw the parallel expansion of INMECAFE, the appearance of which reduce a good number of important intermediaries, as well as offering better prices to the producers and encouraging production. However, it has not, on the whole, been able to modify the local production structure, where there is still a great deal of poverty and exploitation.

The majority of tobacco producers are *ejidatarios* concentrated in two states of the Republic. Traditionally, they have had to deal with a strongly monopolized market, biased towards exports and catering to a mainly multinational cigarette industry. Partly as a result of pressure from the *campesinos* working in this area, the tobacco processing industry was nationalized in the 1970s, and a State enterprise formed *Tabacos Mexicanos* (TABAMEX). Recently several studies have tried to show that it operates as an intermediary for large cigarette companies which operate both in Mexico and abroad. The Mexican enterprise strictly controls all aspects of production, from the production and commercialization of seeds through the distribution of tobacco to industrial consumers. Many attempts have been made at organizing producers, including thorough collectivization of *ejidos*, but to no avail, as far as substantially improving the *ejidatario*'s economic situation is concerned. Internal contradictions have also arisen among the *ejidal* producers and those who cut the tobacco. The former have taken it upon themselves to impose strict exploitation conditions on those who cut the tobacco, for the benefit of the final consumers.

The sugar industry presents a somewhat different picture because of changes which have occurred over the last decades. Since colonial times it has played an important role, and was responsible, during the Porfirio Díaz period, for highlighting some of the main contradictions which arose during the revolution and subsequent years. Zapatism had its initial roots in land belonging to a large sugar mill, and it was here that Zapata had one of his greatest triumphs, legalized a quarter of a century later, during the Cárdenas' government. Since 1940, however, increasing inefficiency and sharp social disputes have marked its development. While a powerful trade union of industrial workers was being formed, the *ejidatarios* responsible for sowing the sugar cane found themselves under strict control. These, in turn, confined by the conditions laid down by the sugar mills, imposed virtually unbearable conditions on the sugar cane cutters, who constituted one of the most severely exploited groups in the country. Government subsidies were provided in the hope of appeasing these political and social disputes as well as keeping prices at a low level for internal consumption; but these subsidies only resulted in further corruption and inefficiency at the industrial level, as well as causing the progressive disarticulation of agroproduction. This was characterized by proliferation of land leasing among *ejidatarios*, together with a productive decrease. In the 1970s, State intervention reached as far as direct operation of the sugar mills and has virtually taken over control. For this industry, the government now has a financing company, a monopolistic commercial enterprise, a dependency which deals with most of the industrial production and a National Commission controlling the industry. This area also enjoys a subsidy of several thousands of million of pesos per annum. But in spite of all these measure, the country no longer exports sugar and in 1980 became a net importer. The sugar mills have begun, very inefficiently, to directly administer the agricultural process. This has produced a kind of *ejidal*

rent for sugar cane *ejidatarios*, who work as paid labourers on their own lands or dedicate themselves to other activities.

Henequen has evolved along similar lines to sugar. As a result of intense social disputes, which caused the well known "*Guerra de Castas*" in Yucatán during the last century, production of henequen has come under State regulation since the 1940s. The producers have to hand their henequen over to government processing plants, not because of legal stipulations, but because of the lack of any profitable alternatives for land or labour use. An official bank takes care of financing production, and CORDEMEX, another State enterprise, deals with its commercialization and industrialization. Large State subsidies have done little to improve the condition of the henequen *campesinos*. The situation of these is an excellent example of how producers are inserted into the overall logic, as well as the subsequent kinds of consciousness raised by this process. Henequen *campesinos* are officially considered as direct producers who receive bank credits and maintain commercial relations with CORDEMEX. However, a few years ago, a group of them demanded from the bank, which gives them weekly payments, a yearly bonus, similar to that which wage-earning industrial and service workers normally receive. The bank refused to do this, alleging the merely financial nature of its intervention in the industry; the *campesinos* were able to show that they did not actually have any decision-making power over their exploitations or working conditions, and that the bank inspectors were those who defined the terms in which the harvest had to take place and CORDEMEX was responsible for regulating sales. Moreover, among the producers there is a very common practice, known as *henequen de luna* (moon henequen), which consists of "stealing" the henequen from their own plots during the night, delivering it to intermediaries who, in turn, sell it to CORDEMEX, in an attempt to overcome bank control and increase their income.

CATTLE RAISING

As shown throughout this book, cattle raising constitutes a characteristic example of concentration of economic and political power. Cattle raising activities integrated during the colonial period and strengthened by the great cattle *haciendas* of the Porfirian period, lasted till after the revolution, since there was no legal limitation on the size of cattle raising areas, which were judged not in terms of hectares but in function of head of cattle. This fact, together with the vagueness of grazing field coefficients —which supposedly related the number of hectares according to a constitutional decree—, encouraged cattle raising interests among those in favour of concentrating land in private hands. It should also be remembered that the vast exploitations which still existed in 1940, were concentrated in the northern states of the Republic, where natural conditions limited agricultural expansion without irrigation systems.

During the last decades, a combined system of cattle raising exploitation has developed, which allots Mexican producers the task of breeding cattle, and that of fattening cattle for southern U.S.A. producers. This scheme has also shown the development in Mexico of the meat packing industry, characterized by its use of lean meat, which was not in high demand on the internal market but was aimed at the U.S.A. market, where combined with other types of meat, it was used for typical products in the U.S.A. diet. The sausage and other pork by-products industry was developed along parallel lines. In all these activities, right from the production of balanced cattle food, veterinary medicines, etc., the multinational companies played an important role, also intervening on a very significant level, in industrial milk production.

All this favoured continuous cattle raising activities, and expansion of these resulted in an ever-increasing take over and control of *ejidal* and communal agricultural lands. Within the global model, meat production from the north of the Republic was aimed at the U.S.A. market, and that of the southern and central areas to the internal market. However, when international prices are high, the production from the southern and central areas has often gone to the U.S.A., creating scarcity and speculation on the internal market.

An example may help illustrate what is happening. The State of Chiapas is an important corn producer and, in some areas, it is even possible to obtain up to three harvests per annum, without using fertilizers. However, over a period of 12 years, corn production stagnated while the number of head of cattle and the area used raising it, doubled. An analysis of 115 serious agrarian disputes, revealed that 86 of these had been provoked by cattle raisers' invasion of *ejidal* and communal lands. Their activities have also been decisive factors in the destruction of the Lacandon jungle, and the ensuing ecological damage to one of the country's most important strategic natural resources. (Cattle raising expansion has had the same effect in the neighbouring State of Tabasco, where forest reserves have been reduced by a fifth in only a few years for the same reason.)

Cattle raisers' activities throughout the country have been a decisive factor in local and regional power structures and *cacique* domination. Their activities also help explain the lawlessness in rural areas and the prevailing climate of violence. Tensions and contradictions between *campesinos* and cattle raisers are caused by the irrational and coercive use of the political and economic power, wielded by the latter. It is probably the most important single factor in the exceptionally violent conditions of rural Mexico.

SILVICULTURE

Mexico is one of the richest countries in the world in forest re-

sources. But the fact that she has to import large quantities of forest originated products, is proof of the great difficulties faced by this sector.

The existing difficulties are related, to some extent, to prevailing legal stipulations and the absence or inefficiency of the systems controlling the present irrational exploitation. A large proportion of forested lands are in the hand of *ejidos* and communities, which can only exploit them under government-issued licenses. A lack of resources on the part of the *ejidatarios* and *comuneros*, on the one hand, and the conditions under which the licenses are granted, on the other, have meant that both the impoverished *campesinos* as well as multiple commercial agents, have inefficiently over exploited forest resources. *Campesino* income is barely increased by their weak but constant forest activities. Commercial exploitation is usually carried out under more or less illegal conditions, which result in the instability of this kind of operation and in little benefit for the forest owners, since it is based on quick profits with little regard for resource conservation.

This, combined with the above mentioned cattle raising activities, is causing accelerated destruction of forest resources in the south of the country, in the States of Chiapas, Tabasco and Campeche, while at the same time displacing thousands of *campesino* producers.

REGIONS

Mexican commercial agriculture is concentrated in the northwestern states and in some Gulf states, extensive cattle raising in the north, the *campesino* economy in the south and southeast, while in the central areas farmers, cattle raisers and *campesinos* coexist.

Three States of the Republic (México, Oaxaca, and Michoacan) absorb a quarter of the economically active population in agricultural and cattle raising activities; and these, together with five States (Puebla, Veracruz, Chiapas, Jalisco and Chihuahua) absorb more than 50%. In six States (Tlaxcala, Oaxaca, Durango, Michoacan, Chiapas and Hidalgo) more than three quarters of the total population dedicate themselves to agriculture and cattle raising, with the *campesino* economy clearly predominant throughout their productive structure. At the other extreme, in three States (Baja California Norte, Baja California Sur and Nuevo León) less than one fifth of the population works in agriculture or cattle raising; in the two former States because of the scarcity of agricultural resources, and in the latter because of the preponderance of industrial activity.

Unemployment in the rural sector also tends to be concentrated: in three States (México, Michoacan, and Hidalgo), more than 50% of the rural population is unemployed. In another seven states (Chiapas,

Chihuahua, Guanajuato, Sinaloa, Tlaxcala, Jalisco and Oaxaca), the proportion reaches four fifths of the total.

It is worthwhile noticing that permanently salaried workers are concentrated in states where the *campesino* economy predominates (Yucatán, Campeche, Tabasco).

In the south and southeast mobility of labour tends to be scarce, although not in the central states,(particularly Jalisco, Michoacan, Guanajuato and México). The State of Sonora absorbs an outstanding amount of labour from other states. The states which provide most migrant labour are Oaxaca and Michoacan, as well as Guanajuato, Durango, Veracruz, Jalisco and Zacatecas. The migrating labour force which goes abroad (*braceros*), comes mainly from the states of Jalisco, México, Oaxaca, Veracruz and Nayarit, that is, the central and northern states.

A numerical account by regions does not throw much light on the how the country is integrated. A final quantification, relating regions and crops, will take us out of the dangerous world of figures. In the northwestern regions of the country, in the states of Coahuila, Chihuahua, Baja California Norte, Sinaloa and Sonora, commercial crops of wheat, oleaginous plants, vegetables, etc., thrive together with intensive and extensive cattle raising. In these regions there are virtually no plots of land of less than a hectare. In the central-southern region, in the states of Hidalgo, Oaxaca, Puebla, Querétaro, San Luis Potosí, and Tlaxcala, corn is the predominant crop. Half the private *minifundios* or *ejidal* lands of less than one hectare, were found in this region in 1950. Twenty years later this proportion had increased to 60%. The former region encompasses half the irrigated land in the country; the latter only 10%. The former absorbs one third of the fertilizers used in the country and 40% of agriculture machinery. The latter consumes less than ten% of fertilizers and machinery.

It is worth trying to make some generalizations in an attempt to summarize this chapter. The north of the country, bordering with the U.S.A., is colonized underpopulated land with little Mesoamerican background; this region was developed by modern commercial agriculture and extensive cattle raising activities which have always tended to be concentrated in few hands and aimed at export. The central and southern regions of the country are Indian *campesino* lands, with some densely populated zones; these regions, developed within a *campesino* economy which returned the land to its original owners, concentrate production of foodstuffs for Mexican consumption. The central and southern areas paved the way for the nation's historical project, signed by national independence and social justice, project which was always denied by the north. But it was men from the north who opened up the way on a global level. Paradoxically,

Francisco Villa and his Northern Division suffered defeat after defeat, until they were wiped out; Emiliano Zapata and his Southern Liberating Army were never militarly defeated. Yet the north prevailed over the south. When the Revolution used the Nation's resources to build a modern society and committed itself to planning and improving agriculture, these efforts were concentrated in the north. In 1970, the northern Pacific region possessed 53% of the cultivated, irrigated areas of the country, while the south had only 1.7%. These facts do not relate in any way to nature's endowments. Just in the State of Chiapas, in the south, a quarter of the country's hydraulic resources are to be found. In spite of this, it hardly has any irrigated land but it does have the highest concentration of Indian groups and is considered by some to be the poorest part of the country. Socioeconomically, Chiapas is the most backward of the States, a situation which has worsened over the last 25 years. The differences, therefore, are not the result of some geographical destiny and this fact should be taken into account when any attempts at change are made. The differences have been brought about by men, by power.

"The Constitutional agrarian concept (drawn up by men from the north) shaped by political and tactical necessities, visualized the returning of lands to the communities. But its acknowledged dream was always that of the old Mexican liberals, i.e. a system of modern, capable self-sufficient, small holdings. This was precisely what inspired the governments of Sonora from 1916 and 1920".[1] While Zapata went on fighting, Calles promulgated laws protecting private property and stimulating "autonomous farmers", as De la Huerta called them. In 1918, while attempts to "incorporate Zapata to constitutionalism has been exhausted, and his murder was being planned, in Sonora programmes were being instigated "to create and protect small holdings". Through agreements with "known farmers", i.e. efficient ones, good lands would be given to those who would act as managers of "cooperatives" on which the old *peones* would receive a salary. These associations would be assited by the government with seeds, funds and legal help, as well as investments and auxiliary service. De la Huerta said "The application of this kind of system to agriculture will make it an inexhaustible source of national wealth, as well as the best way of giving social and political freedom to those poor farmers who have long been nothing but *peones*". As Aguilar Camín stressed: "In an agricultural tradition such as that of Sonora, irrigation, export and machinery are not isolated elements but vital ones, because of the scarcity of labour and water supplies, where the modern *hacendado* was an obvious example to be followed, a regional paradigm more than a focal point for hatred. In this situation, nothing could crystalize more easily or naturally than an agrarian policy, which encouraged profitable and technified

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[1] Héctor Aguilar Camín, LA FRONTERA NOMADA: SONORA Y LA REVOLUCION MEXICANA, Siglo XXI Editores, México, 1977, p. 434.

agricultural enterprises". And the "ideal manager" dreamt of by De la Huerta for this type of exploitation was Alvaro Obregón, the personification of the virtues of productive management, the representative of modern agriculture, the netotiator for federal funds and local facilities, the executive manager, the true moulding element of colonization and the post-revolutionary boom* of the Mayo and Yaqui Valleys".[2] And it was precisely these men, Obregon, De la Huerta and Calles, who occupied the Presidency of the Republic during the 1920s, from which they tried to project Sonora's influence over the entire country. Calles' decision in 1930 to declare agrarianism concluded, was somewhat hasty; Mexico is not Sonora. The vigorous *campesino* answer to agrarian trends gave rise instead, to agrarian actions, which aimed at creating a different distinct national project, that is, that of the *ejidos* and small industrial communities where modern techniques would be at the service of the people and not vice-versa. Paradoxically, Cárdenas achievement of 20 million redistributed hectares, and its consequent social peace, favoured the aggressive return of the dominating restless factions. What Calles could not do in 1930 was again attempted in 1940. And it was nothing less than the Sonora project.

In order to explain why, it may help to take into account the brutal violence which gave origin to Sonora's dynasty. This violence provided the foundations for her present economic, political and productive victory. "If we live, as Elias Canetti maintains, on a mound of dead men and animals, and our identity feeds on all those we have outlined, then it could well be said that Sonora's power is full of graves —the very reason for its strength—, moreover, its resiliant identity actually thrives on having outlived one of the most extensive lists of enemies which anyone has ever defeated, internally, throughout the history of Mexico. It could not wish to be made up of any harder, older clay, than that obtained from the power of the killing and domination of the Yaquis. Those people from Sonora deprived of their vital space, their decisive lands. They personified "the enemy" for those from Sonora, both before and after the civil war. They buckled their resistance to the "civilization" which they wanted to build and in them they discovered instinctively and essentially what they were not, and what they did not want to be, what they wanted to exterminate in order to give themselves the type of life they wanted".[3]

In November 1979, the *Coalición de Ejidos del Yaqui y Mayo* were celebrating the third anniversary of the recovery of their lands. The expropriation had taken place ten days before the change of government and gave rise to one of Mexico's most serious modern crisis,

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* In English in the original

[2] Aguilar Camín, IBIDEM

[3] Aguilar Camín, OP. CIT., p. 446

and to the most hard felt pressures ever exerted on the government by a single powerful group. Before the assembled gathering of guests —trade unionists, independent *campesino* organizations, Indians and intellectuals—, the Coalition related its brilliant achievements. Against all predictions of failure on these lands, which up to then had been worked very efficiently by regional agricultural entrepreneurs, the *campesinos* had managed to increase, year after year, the already high yields of their recovered lands. When financing sources were closed to them and the auxiliary services cancelled, the *campesinos* themselves opened up their own "*Caja*" (saving bank) —based on an age-old tradition— and successfully overcame the enormous difficulties opposing them. And they remembered the names of all those who had died on the way; among others they mentioned those who had died a short tiem previously in San Ignacio Río Muerto, when an attempt was made to stop *campesino* progress within the heart of the monster. They also mentioned the bloody deeds of 1975 which originated in the expropriation of the *latifundio* of the former President Calles' daughter, Alicia Calles de Almada. History always seems to find a way of expressing its deepest roots through anecdotes.

PART THREE
DENOUEMENT AND PROSPECTS

This part of the book will try to summarize those terms which are being used in present day Mexico to discuss, either explicitly or implicitly, the current problems, the proposed solutions, the prospects for rural development and the possible outcome of the violent history of the battle for rural Mexico.

CHAPTER ONE
THE ACADEMIC AND POLITICAL DEBATE

Since 1965 the growing rural crisis has been the subject of an ever widening heated debate within Mexican society. All sectors have taken part, from the most varied of ideological positions and similar intensity has been shown in academic institutions and political gatherings. The interests at stake seem to make it natural that this debate take place in a highly ideologized context. The terms of the discussion tend to degenerate into dogmatic definitions which reflect, through a hundred distortions, the interests at stake. This is partly due to a lack of information available on the present situation, as well as to prejudiced intellectual tradition, which has been incapable of getting to the heart of the newer aspects of the present situation. In spite of this, however, over the last decade, many varied attempts have been made to carry out empirical as well as theoretical research projects, which have been throwing new light on the current debate.

In this kind of debate, which has provoked thousands of printed pages in academic texts and millions of lines in newspapers, there is always the risk of oversimplification, for omissions and prejudices are inevitable. And this is the risk taken in this book; however, it is better to take the risk than to silence a central issue of concern in the present situation.

It is no exaggeration to say that Mexico is at a turning point in its history: the problem is that this now sounds cliché and merely provokes tired, wane smiles from those who hear it, for it represents yet another example of the empty rhetoric which has characterized the discussion up to now. This turning point seems to deny all but utopia —and this does not exist in the world as we know it. But what is clear, is that conventional pathways can no longer be followed, for the general direction of these has been emphasized over the last years and it is that the Apocalysis is just round the corner. No one questions the need for change. During the 1970s, Mexican society had an opportunity of getting to know itself, of

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seeing its bad points, of facing up to truths about its own limitations, of seeing its weaknesses and excesses, of feeling the frustration derived from the failure of long-hoped for expectations, of seeing its development model fail while the discussion rambled on over whether it should have been adopted in the first place, or whether at the time there had been any other viable alternative. But now a choice has to be made. And while the possibilities for change are analyzed or the opposing forces clash over how this should be done, the need for formulating a national project becomes increasingly evident. Obviously, the project could become trapped in the very inertia of the process from which it evolved, merely looking for the same old repetitions. But it also has the chance to deny this, and open up the way to new prospects, becoming a guiding light in this transforming action. This is really what the national debate is all about.

THE NATURE OF THE MEXICAN STATE

The nature of the Mexican State is at the heart of all this discussion. Although time has passed, the debate continues —even increases— on the nature of the Revolution from which it evolved. Some happily accept the old definition: a democratic-bourgeois revolution which enabled the dominant class of modern capitalist society, the bourgeoisie, to take over control. Others point out that the Mexican Revolution was the first social revolution of the century, and not the last bourgeois one. Even though this does not tell us very much, it opens the door to a wide interplay of positions: the revolution can be considered as a failure, or merely as interrupted or unfinished, it can be seen as being tired, destroyed, exhausted, renewed, predictive or promising... All of which can be synthesized in an alternative. Some believe that in order to bring about any kind of change, a new revolution with differing characteristics must be initiated; while others want to reactivate the old one, either taking it to its final conclusion or getting the strength from it to be able to give form and meaning to its as yet unfulfilled hopes. Or perhaps, as others claim, the most important thing to do is to "sweep" the country clean of all popular rhetorical trends and to enter on the scene of modern politics, understood as liberal democracy.

In Mexico, the liberal idea of "government for all" has not taken on much credibility. On the one hand, there is the question of its legitimacy: for some, effective suffrage is not sufficient (even the effectiveness is questionable) for it results in formal, not real, representation of the dominated classes. On the other hand, there is the theoretical and political question of the very nature of government. Even diverse points of view agree that it should be put above all the social protagonists, as the coercive power of society: as the legal-political instance, which can impose its authority on

individuals and classes, as a kind of referee between these. Others however, are more concerned with the nature and affiliation of effective government power. Most people reject the idea of government being a simple combination of juxtaposed individual opinions, or that of a "loyal interpreter" —and no more than an interpreter— of "popular will". Some see it simply as an instrument of the dominant classes "the specialized apparatus of repression", or "domination" used by these classes to enforce their power. They suspect that the "populist" nuances or even authentically popular trends, are nothing more than manipulative devices for maintaining the necessary control over the masses. Others claim that these "mass politics" are not something confined to the Mexican Government, but a very coherent action undertaken by the authorities, who are aware that any modern capitalist society has to develop social consensus in order to be able to govern. Since the Constitution of the Republic answers to a specific productive regime, that is, the capitalist system, and sets political guidelines for the solution of its contradictions, the main task of the government would then be to maintain and reproduce the power necessary to enforce these political guidelines. In order to do this, partial violence would be acceptable as a means of avoiding generalized violence, which would only reveal society's incapability of politically channelling its inherent contradictions. Mass politics would be a fundamental instrument for this purpose, but its inadequacy occasionally opens the door to violence against the masses, in situations where emotions rise and the global stability of the system finds itself threatened. Finally, there are others who claim that the Nation is the ring or arena where society's class conflicts are played out or processed, and that the Government is the expression (something more than a mere reflection or representation) of the political correlation of social forces. Its levels of autonomy would be related to its expressive capacity. Its role as a referee (Caesarism, Bonapartism, etc.) would merely be for the sake of appearances; when weilding power, government does not express itself but the historical, social and political forces from which it evolved. Since these are always highly dynamic forces, played out against a background of constantly changing alliances and correlations, within the constitutional limits of Mexican society as such and its interrelation with the new strategic areas of world power, the government itself undergoes constant change (although it never goes beyond these limits). The real contradictions of society would thus be reflected internally, when this interplay of alliances and correlations, by which "internal forces" make their preferences and options felt, is reproduced within it.

All these factors are explicitly present in the debate on rural Mexico, for the situation of the *campesinos* within the Mexican State, and their relationship with Government are determining elements; both for how the State is conceived and how this in turn views the *campesinos* and their prospects. Mexican society was, and still is, mainly *campesino*. Social consensus is inconceivable if it does not include, or if it subordinates, a group which makes up more than half the total population, and which at the beginning of the century

embraced all areas of society. Both admission or exclusion of the *campesinos* from the Mexican State and its Government, necessarily implies some kind of rupture. To include them explicitly with full rights, implies giving them strength and mobility to radically oppose the interests of other social classes —be these permanent or not, tactical or strategical. This would obviously make the social consensus necessary for governing impossible. A direct decision to explicitly exclude them would mean the State and Government losing the numerically most important social group, which would also make the task of government impossible; and violence would be the only way to enforce this kind of exclusion. This situation may help to explain what little success has been achieved by explicit positions which go beyond rhetorical levels. The reactions they evoke —both at verbal and reality levels— mean they are soon blockaded. Hence an implicit definition on the issue tends to be maintained, while a deep, quiet struggle evolves round the dialectics of admission-exclusion, which varies according to the continuously changing circumstances.

THE ORIGIN OF THE RURAL CRISIS

These problems are highlighted by the interpretations made about the origin and development of the rural crisis and the efforts being made to resolve it.

The conventional version of "structural dualism" obviously exists. Because of some original sin or because of the "polarizing dynamics" of society, the existence of two sectors in agrarian structure is taken for granted: one modern and dynamic, the other backward and stagnating. Even though for some the crisis is a result of the loss of dynamism of the former sector, analytical studies tends to concentrate on the cause of the backwardness of the latter, as a way of also explaining the loss of dynamism of the former.

This line of reasoning tends to look for the problem in the backward sector by using comparative statics: they detect the "missing elements" which hinder development. Obviously, it is impossible to see a missing element; however, since this is a comparative exercise, the idea is to observe what is missing in the backward sector, by comparing it to the advanced sector: capital, education, technology, business-mindedness, etc. Then, according to this kind of reasoning, the solution would merely be to inject the missing elements in order to stimulate development. Another point of view, along these same lines, simply describes it within the framework of a linear process of development, where the backward sector is merely at a prior stage and its "natural" —or artificially accelerated— evolution will lead it to the developed stages where the modern sector is found.

Other approaches tautologically suggest that the crisis is related to the rupture of the postwar expansive model which had led to a boom, especially in the 1950s and the first half of the 1960s. The real problem lies in looking for the cause of this rupture. Theories about the exhaustion of the model, exhaust themselves. What is feasible at a given moment, ceases to be at others; an alternative has to be found. Others, who still believe in the validity of the model, look for its limiting factors. Thus, some claim that there are no more "progressive farmers" able to take advantage of the technology of the Green Revolution or that it is impossible to take the revolution any further along the same lines (irrigation, etc.) for a variety of reasons; they propose, therefore, to create adequate conditions for its continuation, by modifying its limiting factors. They suggest, for example, the creation of new technological deals to be used under seasonal conditions, so that new "progressive farmers" can continue the task. Others think that the cause of the problem is to be found in extra-economic conditions, particularly in political actions which they consider to be demagogic. They suggest that legal insecurity and the problems of tenure, for example, prevent private investment in agricultural land, thus blockading the model's progress.

And finally there are those who reject both, the dualism hypothesis and the expansive model. They consider that the dynamism of one sector can only be attained at the expense of the other, and see the cause of the crisis in this interaction; a model biased towards the developed sector necessarily led to the deterioration of the *campesino* economy, to the point that it was impossible for it to accommodate the vigour of commercial agriculture which it had never had in the first place. Although it would be possible to reinstate this by keeping public resources directed towards creating and strengthening it, it would be useless and insufficient to do so, due to the level of deterioration which already characterizes the *campesino* economy. Hence, it was accordingly suggested, that these funds be directly channelled to the *campesinos*: for some this simply means increasing the net amount of the budget for agriculture and cattle raising; others suspect that funds used in this way would eventually reach the same people as before, having passed ineffectively through *campesino* hands. They suggest the need for a change in policy, that would remove from commercial agriculture those resources which continue strengthening it (and which enable it, in effect, to support itself under *campesino* development), in order to seriously cater for the needs of the *campesino* economy.

The attempts made in the 1970s to face the crisis, reflect the fluctuation and conflux of these positions. What has happened in practice is that an attempt has been made to follow the guidelines implicit in all these positions, all at the same time, which obviously nullified any effort and clouded any pancramic view of the situation.

THE NATURE OF THE CAMPESINO ECONOMY

Against this background, it was obvious that attention be focused on the *campesino* economy. For the most varied reasons and purposes the so-called "traditional or subsistence agriculture" —evidently biased in its outlook— or the *campesino* economy —again biased— became the focal point of interest. In order to explain what had happened and intent some kind of change, it was of primary importance to ascertain what the characteristics were of the reality to be transformed.

When those involved in the debate decided to look at other countries' experience and knowledge, they were disappointed. As far as theory goes, *campesino* history is still remarkably obscure. Economics deals with this area in a very careless way: in its very inception it gave and took away from the *campesinos*, the opportunity to become the main protagonist. Since for the physiocrats the land was the supreme element in economic life, today it seems that in this theoretical context, the men of the earth, the *campesinos*, should have had a predominant place. But those who are considered to have been the first "real" economists, hardly considered them. They were practically looked upon as part of the natural resources, little more than an extra element in the landscape.

It has been said that classical theorists have been tested, that they really become what they are, when they apply their theory to land rent. Only those who develop their own interpretation of the problem can trascend in history. But even in these cases the *campesinos* are again merely shadows, entrepreneurs locked in battle against the landlords. They appear only to disappear; they only begin to figure in theories when they cease to be what they are and become part of the rural or urban proletariat. The protagonists in this process are tenants, gentry, junkers, farmers, or *hacendados*, never *campesinos*.

As the crowning glory to these classical theories, Marx barely mentions them in his basic writings. For him they seem to represent little more than a "sack of potatoes", a class which could never function as such on its own, and that was destined to disappear, torn apart by the contradictions between two living classes —the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. However, towards the end of his life, Marx turned his attention to the peasant issue and became "peasantized". When the subject of his studies was the Russian peasant (not the European peasant to whom he applied the previous expression), he comes to very different conclusions. He even claims, that the mir, the Russian rural community, has a different historical option from that of the primitive community. Instead of entering a disintegrating phase, it could become a "regenerating factor" in Russian society, as well as the "point of departure" for the building of a new society.[1] However, for over a century the ortho-

[1] See, Karl Marx and Frederic Engels, "The class struggles in Russia", in THE

dox line of marxist theorists disregarded these final conclusions, so critical for the Marxist debate over the *campesino* economy. This debate seemed to have been reduced theoretically and historically to the sack of potatoes image.

Since Marx had closed the classical position —which had become politically dangerous in academic circles— it became vital to search for new horizons. The propositions, turned out by the Austrian school, totally ignored the *campesino* position. The rare times they referred to it was as some anomalous left-over not worth the while. It did not even arouse any theoretical uneasiness.

The *campesino* fate was not better off in the hands of the neoclassists, the keynesians nor the marginalists. From Marshall to Mill, they only appear as a theoretical concept once they have lost their specific characteristics. Thus, once they no longer fit into their own intimate reality, they can be classified into one of the preconceived (urbanly conceived) pigeon holes: those corresponding to the optimizing, market oriented homo economicus. The ultramodern attitude of the monetarist school is even tighter. What is the use of worrying over social agents who operate on the fringes of monetary circulation?

Anthropology comes on the social science scene as a direct link with certain agrarian societies but it takes a long time for this discipline to redirect its primary interest for the past. In only deals with the *campesino* issue when it appears as part of primitive exotic societies. And these societies, themselves surviving entities from the past, are only of interest as far as they relate to the urban present, in as far as they can offer clues for interpretation or ways of understanding overall present societies or their history. Thus the *campesinos* once more fall into obscurity: as left-overs from economic processes, shadowy hangers-on of history, the ignored and ignorant anonymous masses.

Finally, sociology for its part, when it is not trying to squeeze the *campesinos* into some kind of taxonomy without which it cannot seem to function, tries, as does economics, to exterminate them. They are only of interest in their resistance to be what they are not. Variation, modernization, mobility, are all concepts which have been defined in terms alien to *campesino* reality. What is interesting about *campesinos*, if there is anything interesting, is how they interiorize the outside reality which shapes their destiny. Even if sociological analysis of the *campesinos* issue is turned into

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RUSSIAN MENACE TO EUROPE (Collection of articles and speeches, letters and other documents, compiled by Paul W. Bladstock and Bert F. Hoselitz), The Free Press, Glencoe, Illinois, 1952, pp. 203 and ff., and Michael Dugget, "Marx on Peasants", in THE JOURNAL OF PEASANT STUDIES, Vol. 2, No. 2, London, January, 1975.

a specialized area of study —rural sociology— it still is unable —as is agricultural economics— to authentically venture into a particular and novel reality. It is merely an extrapolation.

This state of affairs in the social sciences —which fortunately has begun to show signs of change in recent years— strongly influenced debate on the matter in Mexico. For some time, there was a conformist attitude towards formal generalizations, such as those of Redfield: *campesinos* are "a species of human organization with certain universal traits".[2] However, the inadequacy of this notion soon became evident. This was mainly due to the fact that *campesino* life-style did not fit easily into the theoretical framework of those disciplines, which might have been able to deal with it. These theories have to be distorted to a greater or lesser extent, if they are to shed some light on that evanescent and polifacetic reality.

Present *campesino* reality is not going to be understood if we suppose it merely to be the continuity of a social entity which has retained its essential characteristics throughout history. An ahistoric view point is a worthless point of departure. This type of study can only provide insight into traditions and customs which do little to deepen knowledge of the reality it studies.

The same situation has occurred in Mexico —and still occurs— when a neoclassical approach is used to analyze the *campesino* economy. In this type of profit maximizer, optimization behaviour studies the *campesino* as an entity alienated from "economic rationality" by the operation of anti-economic plots of land. This point of view has increased prejudice towards the *campesino* issue and is essentially a sterile way of trying to come to any conclusions, theoretical or practical, on the rural crisis and its solutions.

Conventional research was seriously affected when eventually it had to admit the failure of its inherent expectations. "Up to World War II, it was still possible to believe —as both Marxists and neoclassical economists did— that capitalist expansion would develop the Third World. It might do so in an outrageous exploitative way, but still the result would be development. Since World War II, it has become clear to a number of serious thinkers that this is not the case. Most of them have been Marxists, but there are representatives of the established wisdom, like John Hicks and Hyla Mint".[3] This concern has even reached the economic centres of world power. Recent analyses of the World Bank,

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[2] Robert Redfield, PEASANT SOCIETIES AND CULTURE. University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1956, p. 86. Redfield went beyond this formal notion, but not much further when he equated *campesinos* interests with a "cultural condition", interacting with other "aspects" or "dimensions" of the society to which *campesinos* belong.

[3] Michael Harrington, THE VAST MAJORITY, Simeon & Shuster, New York, p. 129.

which are the basis for its Strategy for Basic Needs, start out with the conclusion that success of the strategies adopted since World War II corresponds to the increasing poverty and hunger in two thirds of the world.

What is clearly obvious in all this discussion is the central issue of concern over the radical failure of long nurtured predictions that the *campesinos* would fade away. The fact is that they do exist and their numbers increase daily: two thirds of humanity, the "Vast Majority" as Harrington calls it, demands an explanation of its existence and of its possibilities for development. The matter is of genuine widespread concern. Shortly before the dramatic withdrawal of U.S. troops from Vietnam, the Secretary of Defense, Robert McNamara gave a strange speech in Montreal. He said that poverty in the under-developed countries (poverty which is essentially that of the *campesinos*), has been the main source of violence, past, present and future, in the post World War II period. "In future years", he added, "violence will flare up in the nations in the southern hemisphere". This interpretation goes parallel to the awareness that productivity is not helping reduce shortages, nor is it solving the problem of development. "Peasant suspiciousness towards 'progress' is no longer unfounded nor unwarrented. They have seen how this progress has been imposed by the global history of corporative capitalism and they have seen the power of this history even over those who are looking for an alternative. This suspiciousness cannot of itself form the basis of an alternative for political development. The pre-condition for this alternative is that the peasant develop self-awareness. If they manage to do this, they as a class, would then have a way of attempting to change their class experience and characteristics".[4] While conventional wisdom maintained its sterile race against time, obstinately entrenching past economic and institutional inertia even further, new streams of thought began to appear in Mexico, regarding the definition of new political options. The academic debate on the nature of the *campesino* economy tended to become a political issue, the direct concern of those groups and classes who seek social change.

The hypothesis of articulating modes of production as a characteristic feature of all social formation, was one of the positions which came to the fore in the discussion. The *campesino* issue was included in the "simple mercantile mode of production", which was articulated and subordinated to the capitalist mode of production. This approach also assumes that in order to exist, capital needs a non-capitalist reality to penetrate thus providing a key for its expansion. This view underlines the conventional notion of *campesino* extinction as a result of their assimilation into the proletariat, following the classical sequence. It points out "from the stand-

[4] John Berger, "Towards understanding peasant experience", in RACE AND CLASS, Vol. XIX, No. 4, Spring, 1978, p. 358.

point of independent revolutionary organizations, it is crucial to settle accounts with the agrarian past. Marxist interpretation of the agrarian problem takes on great relevance in Mexico, for it means —as far as the ideological struggle is concerned— the precise differentiation of the theoretical and political space of the bourgeosie and of the petit bourgeosie from the specific space of the proletariat. Summing up, the great weight of populist agrarianism bequeathed from the 1910 Mexican Revolution and from the Cardenist reforms, must be clearly distinguished from proletarian positions, so that it does not overwhelm the independant popular movement beginning to develop in Mexico. A proletarian view is needed not only of bourgeosie characteristics and domination mechanisms, but also of other popular non-proletarian classes and strata (mainly the *campesino* class) which frequently become an exceptionally legitimate basis of bourgeois power". This approach defines the *campesinado* "as a social class different from the proletariat", from an "alienated, external interpretation, of what the *campesinado* is" that points out "the petit bourgeosie character of *campesino* production which is evident from the simple mercantile condition of its mode of production and its property links with the land." This position suggests that "the petit bourgeosie side (of the *campesino*) has exhausted its revolutionary potential and now it is time for the proletarian side to reveal itself". All this corresponds to the idea that the *campesino* is "an exploited petit bourgeois". The context within which this evolution would be possible implies a capitalist framework with tendencies to proletarize and impoverish the *campesino* on the one hand, and to refunctionalize him, on the other.[5]

This line of reasoning which sees the *campesino* as a non-proletarian class with an "extra-capitalist" existence (although subordinated to capital), has entered the debate at several points. For some, the tendency to "proletarize" the *campesinos* in conventional terms, will continue; certain authors have used statistics to show the progress of this tendency throughout the century and conclude that only a few *campesinos* are left. Proletarians (defined as salaried workers in the conventional sense) now predominate in rural areas. Others foresee the need to refunctionalize the *campesino* for a long period yet to come. They will continue as members of a non-capitalist mode of production, in order to satisfy the needs of capitalist development and reproduction. Finally there are others who accpet all this, accept future prospects. Today, they claim capital can neither proletarize nor refunctionalize *campesinos* and therefore has no other option but to eliminate them. Since this assumption is made within a world framework, it suggests that the only way *campesinos* can avoid this fate (or rather the lack of one) would be through the creation of a strong political organization at an international level, which would enable them to confront the forces which at this level try to destroy them.

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[5] Roger Bartra, "Una extinción imposible en marcha permanente", 1978 (Xerox).

Other streams of thought mistrusted the hypothesis of the articulation of different modes of production and denounced its structuralist and althusserian faults. They also questioned the idea that vast sectors of the world population were still alien to capitalist production even though subordinated to it. They consider the *campesinos* not as a mode of production but as a social class which forms part of the capitalist society in the same terms as any other class. They even rejected the classification of *campesinos* as petit bourgeoisie, and saw them as strictly proletarian, because of their contradictions with capital. They did point out, however, that although they were proletariat, they were different from industrial or agrarian workers because they are subject to specific mechanisms of exploitation, different from those of other workers. Bearing in mind this peculiarity, they claimed that *campesinos* could establish alliances with workers since both are proletarians (in contradiction with capital), although with their own specific claims, associated to the difference in history, present situation and future prospects. Seen from this approach, it is unlikely that, in the near future, a classical process of proletarianization will occur, namely that capitalism could integrate *campesinos* as permanently salaried workers. The prospect of the physical elimination of *campesinos*, either through genocide or through the slower but equally efficient rural or urban "marginalization" (which goes beyond the existing conditions needed to maintain a reserve industrial army) requires the creation of a political alternative, fully capable of recognizing the specific situation of the *campesinos* and upon which different possibilities have been enunciated.

Besides these approaches and positions dealing with current and future problems, there are some others which look towards the past. Kulakization, the progressive agglutination of individual plots of land resulting from the dynamics of the "more capable and hardworking *campesinos*" still influences the analysis of many groups. Many of them would unhesitatingly share the same opinions as President Plutarco E. Calles in 1924: "My preference for the middle class is mainly based upon my efforts to create a class of small *campesino* land owners. I yearn to see each *campesino* possessing a plot of land to work. The conversion of each *campesino* into a land owner is the best way of avoiding revolutionary and political turmoil. The result would be personal and even commercial interest of the *campesinos* in supporting the present situation". As will be remembered, Calles did not consider the Mexican *ejido* or common cultivation of the land as "true forms" of the economy and he claimed that the community should be a transitory form for creating small holdings. Past experience has shown that explicit propositions to eliminate *ejidos* or native communities are not advisable. Because of this, some recent positions suggest ways of doing this without declaring so explicitly. For instance, some suggest legalizing the generalized practice of renting *ejido* plots, creating legal conditions for their voluntary alienation or promoting associating mechanisms among private *ejidatarios*, *comuneros* and *minifundistas*, to allow the direct intervention of the capitalist system in the exploitation of the

land. Up to now, the Constitution has prohibited this, although the practice is widespread.

In opposition to these proposals, are the agrarian claims which denounce them as ways of trying to reconstitute *latifundios*, a position which no one in Mexico could easily defend. Along with the old arguments, new ones have been put forth which try to place the debate in an international context. The multinationalization of capital hypothesis and the analysis of modern agribusiness operating conditions on a world scale show what the consequences would be for Mexico if she blindly continues along the path laid down by the new international division of labour.

CHAPTER TWO
THE DISPUTE OVER RESOURCES

The academic and political debate over the rural question, is in fact covering up an intense dispute over productive resources determined by the general situation. Although it does not refer exclusively to land and agricultural production, its major strategy dimension is found in these areas.

On the most evident level, the dispute developed around the use of the so-called "oil rent". The discussion was directed above all, to the rationality of oil exploitation. One of the first questions relates the level of production to proven reserves, and points out the risk of exhaustion before alternative sources of energy appear as substitutes. Even though it is a crucial problem that ought to be rigorously examined, the fact that Mexico is, at present, the sixth major world oil producer —given the level of reserves— and the frequent announcements of new discoveries, have weakened the argument in this respect.

A second question that has also aroused public attention refers to the technical, social and economic conditions under which production is taking place. Adverse implications as a consequence of the rapid advance of activities in the exploration and production of oil on the ecological system and on the condition of large sections of the population, have been pointed out. Although this topic attracts more public attention, it tends to be considered as "the price of modernization" and has not inhibited further activities. It has only led to suggestions for modifying some of current practices.

Intense political controversy has emerged regarding the "petroleum platform", that is controversy over the specific level of production which should be maintained. This is a many faceted problem. The level fixed by the present government, at the beginning of 1977, was reached before its deadline, and in 1979 the possibility of raising it was explicitly programmed. Many tended to consider that this resulted from external pressures, rather than national necessities

and therefore opposed it. Others pointed out that the strategic interest of other countries, in short, the United States, does not refer so much to the immediate production of petroleum (since Mexico continues to be a marginal supplier to that country) as to the development of exploitation capacity. The main point, according to this argument, is that Mexico "be ready" to rapidly increase its production. Although a policy of "closed wells" would be maintained, it would be able to respond to unexpectedly high demands in times of crisis. Official statements have denied the possibility of Mexico replacing Middle East supplies but the question remains open. On March 18th, 1980, when the President of Mexico announced a moderate increase in the "petroleum platform", the Director of *Petróleos Mexicanos* warned that it would be possible to continue increasing production capacity, but that this is precisely what many consider to be inconvenient or irrational for the interests of the country. Closely related to this, is the question of the use to be given to petroleum revenues. In fact, a good part of the argument about conservative policy of exploitation did not originate from concern over reserves, but from anticipation and fears over the "absorption capacity" of the Mexican economy and society for these revenues. While there was great internal pressure to generate resources that would permit development plans to go ahead and particularly to attend to those most in need, warnings were formulated about the inflationary effects that an uncontrolled increase of oil revenues could have. Within the present context and its political correlation of prevalent forces, fears of a "Venezuelation", or an "Iraniazation" of the country expressed, for many, the idea that oil revenues would tend to stimulate still further concentration and centralization of economic and political power.

In this context, the association between oil and rural areas appears in very direct form. The present government pointed out, right from the start, that its two major priorities were food and energy. The recommendation that the ex-Minister of Petroleum of Saudi Arabia formulated while passing through Mexico: "It is necessary to transform petroleum wealth into agricultural prosperity before it's too late", tends to be accepted without difficulty. On announcing on March 18th, 1980 a moderate increase on the "petroleum platform", the President recognized the limited achievements of his government in the priority of food, as compared with the great advances of energy production, and announced an ambitious program for food self-sufficiency in Mexico: the *Sistema Alimentario Mexicano* or the Mexican Alimentary System, a model that establishes production and consumption goals and sketches a *campesino* based strategy.

It is necessary, however, to place the question in a wider context. At the beginning of 1979, President Carter picked up enthusiastically the proposal of an American congressman who suggested an exchange of corn for petroleum, in its trade with Mexico. While the proposal stirred up angry adverse reactions in the country and the President felt obligated to explicitly reject it in his Report on the State of the Nation speech, the fact is that the country is export-

ing petroleum while the need to import food has increased. As has already been indicated, seven million tons of food, almost half of which is corn, will have to be acquired abroad to satisfy the 1980 demand. The agricultural and cattle raising trade balance, traditionally favourable, has been deteriorating rapidly. Although the direct exchange of corn for petroleum appears to be little more than a simplification that makes no sense, the implications derived from it are certainly not.

In 1978, when a National Plan for Industrial Development was made public, a forecast was included that, since then, has been the object of analysis and concern. According to observed tendencies and under the assumption that there would be no substantial change in them, the Plan pointed that in 1990 the country will be dedicating two thirds of oil revenue to food importation. Another econometric model carried the projection to the year 2000. Consistent with this estimation, Mexico would have had to dedicate all of its oil revenue in this last year, to food imports. This implies, as previously pointed out, that the country will have been running desperately only to find itself in the same spot.

Within this context, it is assumed that growing amounts of resources will have to be channelled into agricultural and cattle raising development, in order to increase food production. Thus, to the forefront of the discussion, is the definition of the principal protagonist of the task that remains. It is not only an attempt to attract public resources, although this also constitutes a coveted prize. It is an attempt to establish who will be strengthened by such resources and the programmes and measures associated to them, for when they get to the rural areas they will find themselves in the middle of a dispute that has been gaining intensity. The credit, the subsidies, the infrastructure and all the other elements that integrate the "auxiliary services package" can only be controlled and applied through control of the land and of productive processes in which they are materialized. This is what the conflict finally boils down to.

As has been discussed throughout this book, the *campesinos* have managed to retain for themselves the formal usufruct of most of the available agricultural land in the country and a good part of the cattle raising land. They may be *ejidatarios*, *comuneros*, *colonos*, *nacionaleros*, or private *minifundistas*, but they are all *campesinos*, and the usufruct that they possess is rarely openly disputed in formal legal terms. As has also been said, however, this does not mean that they find themselves in a position to define how production is oriented or the conditions under which the productive process develops. This orientation and these conditions have gradually been establishing themselves, more and more, in terms of the logic imposed by multinational agribusiness, either directly or through intermediaries: national agribusiness, farmers, *rancheros*, *caciques*... or State enterprises.

The conflict has been developing in the most varied of ways, although its inherent violence is spreading and tending to become potentially or actually more intense. Land invasions are daily occurrences. Those led by *campesinos* to recuperate land taken from them, receive greater news coverage, even though those undertaken by cattle raisers and other agents seem to be more frequent. The latter use the agrarian backlog (hectares redistributed only on paper) or the legal indefinition that prevails in extensive areas as an excuse while often restorting force, either private or public. These generally brutal actions develop along with many other, often subtle forms. This does not mean however, that they cease to be the symptomatic expression of a deeo conflict, an authentic dispute for the nation —as an outstanding analyst called it— that at any moment oversteps, or threatens to overstep the limits of the political context within which an attempt is made to overcome the contradictions.

SELF-SUFFICIENCY AND COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGES

The dispute over the resources is revealed, in a strategic manner, through the general orientation of production.

One dimension of the problem has been aired beneath the theoretical —and ideological— cover of the thesis of comparative advantages. For many years through the application of conventional profit criteria, it appeared natural that the country concentrate on production of those articles that possess "comparative advantages" —natural or economic— in order to obtain due benefits from international trade: it would export products that could be sold "expensively" and would import "cheaply" those in which it was less "efficient". In this way, the necessity to import was considered acceptable, just as it was to employ the better productive resources in production of export crops, as long as the commercial agricultural and cattle raising balance continued to be favourable. Even when the importations reached massive levels, it was observed that rural areas would continue being able to "pay" for them, because their production still generated a favourable net balance of foreign exchange.

In the seventies, the technical debate over the thesis of comparative advantages was revived. Besides refuting the logic of the argument, using as a point of departure the theoretical advances that authors such as Arghiri Emmanuel had developed, examination of the international experience was presented in order to expose the mythical character of the theory, which prevented the relations of force that really determine the direction and benefits of international exchanges from being perceived.

Above or aside from these technical aspects, however, political arguments were brought to the forefront. The prospect of growing im-

portation of grains, in a straightened world market, made it clear that, independent of all considerations of economic convenience, it was vital to avoid the worst of dependencies, that of the stomach. The 1972 world food crisis confronted more than forty countries with the problem of starvation, and scarcity knocked at the door of the industrialized world itself, even though the latter seemed to have long since overcome such difficulties. Whether it was convenient or not to sell "expensive" articles on world markets and buy "cheap" ones, the fact was that it was not possible to get those that were needed at any price. All this served as a warning signal. At the end of that year, absolute priority was granted to the goal of self-sufficiency in the national production of food.

It remained, however only on paper, to fill out the catalogues of good intentions that have always been produced in this country. Throughout the rest of the decade, the goal got further and further away until it got to the point of seeming unreachable. Analyses which tried to explain why this had happened stressed, the "deviation" from government programmes: many of them maintained prior orientations through inertia and were not able to adapt themselves to the new circumstances. But this was only a part of the story. The central question was different. Who was to be the main protagonist of the new orientation of the productive efforts?

The logic of agricultural and cattle raising operations, national or multinational, was —and is— tied to the profitability criteria. While the policy of controlled prices for the basic foodstuffs is maintained —and there is nothing to make one think that it can or should be abandoned, although efforts to "free it" gradually have been observed— economic logic will separate basic crops from "modern" agriculture. The factors already indicated mean that multinational agribusiness has been barred from the production of corn and other basic foodstuffs. Its real option, as that of many national economic agents —the cattle raisers, for example—, is not found among the diversity of crops but in the production of commercial products (such as meat and milk) or not participating in agricultural and cattle raising production. In this way, the policy of self-sufficiency that was generally accepted at formal levels has unacceptable implications for the structures of domination: it means giving *campesinos* the main responsibility for satisfying the productive needs of the nation.

THE ORGANIZATION OF PRODUCERS

Organizing *campesinos* has become a central aspect of the discussion of the rural crisis, although how this is done corresponds to very diverse objectives. For those who insist on a "neutral" perception of the problem, only the question of productivity is discussed: to

attain required results, the *campesinos* have to be organized in such a way as to raise productive efficiency, to improve revenue and reach the physical goals of production. For others, the matter is one of organizing *campesinos'* productive activity, in such a way that, given the restrictions which have prevailed in the judicial-political context, agribusiness can act within this boundary with greater flexibility and profitability. For others, organizing the *campesinos* is not the central issue so much as creating the conditions in which their own productive and social organizations will open up a way of liberation for them.

An important area of opinion, both inside and outside the government, has been oriented towards promoting associative schemes. The global logic of its proposals suggests that public or private agribusiness, without giving up profitable lines of business, would extend its activities to basic production, displacing traditional agents of lesser economic and political power, who are currently necessary intermediaries in the operation with *campesino* producers. The operation could be predictably profitable, under the assumption that there would be important official subsidies and that the diverse costs, risks and uncertainties of the activity, would again be assumed by the *campesino*. From another angle, the associative scheme would seek to formally respect the standing agricultural structures —the *ejido*, the community, the legally permitted dimension of small holdings— although in practice it would inevitably damage them. The mechanism, in fact, would imply liberating the widening of scale of operations from legal and other restraints. Although the scheme has evident liberal overtones, it means abandoning the original dream of small producers, expanding at the cost of their neighbours, in order to pass directly to modern forms of capitalist agricultural operations. The purpose, in some cases, has been to create large and highly productive units or farms and, in others, to generalize the agricultural contract system, passing over the tenure system which still continues to be politically untouchable and preventing, in this way, its functioning as an obstacle to expansion.

Another stream of thought, not substantially different from the last one, again emphasizes collectivization programmes. Through diverse models of collective organization of production, it tries to convince the *campesinos* to adopt patterns of organization and division of labour that permit them to raise productivity and adjust themselves more adequately to global needs. Diverse mechanisms to overcome the traditional limits on collectivization have been proposed: the expulsion of labour force, as a consequence of the same increase of productivity, that generates internal conflicts which are frequently inevitable. Likewise, progressive forms of collectivism, that give greater flexibility to the process have been suggested. Other proposed mechanisms have tried to prevent, without clearly showing how they can really do it, collectivization being converted into another instrument which subjects peasants to public and private organisms with which the collectivized units have to relate.

Finally, another stream of thought, stresses the regulation of relations between *campesinos* and the rest of society under the assumption that what has been discussed is essentially the relation between labour and capital.

On the one hand, the unionization of temporary or permanent wage labourers is suggested, a move that until now has not been possible. The problem is associated with, in part, the difficulties of collective contracting given the lack of congruence between those who own or have title to the land and the agribusiness, the *cacique*, or the State enterprise, which manages it. Furthermore, most rural wage labourers only find seasonal work of a casual nature on farms where there is no possibility of collective organization. While the unionization efforts in productive units persist, they have engendered other lines of action that grow outward from *campesino* organizations, which would adopt the form of unions when members establish a relation to capital under wage labour conditions.

On the other hand, given that wages are not the general form of relation between capital and labour in agricultural and cattle raising production, it has been suggested that the regulating effort be directed to the organization and strengthening of "collective mercantile contracts". With these, the power of the collective organization could confront capital under more equal conditions. In order to adapt to the specific characteristics of *campesino* production, instead of wage-negotiated contracts, like those of industrial workers —in which capital directly contracts labour force. The object of the negotiated contract would be the materialization of productive effort. The contracts would include stipulations on resources that would be supplied by the *campesinos* —land, labour force, means of production, etc.—, and over those that would be supplied by the economic agent, public or private, taking part in the contracting. The terms of appropriation of value and surplus value amongst the participants would be the object of negotiation, in the conventional terms of a collective contract.

In close relation with these propositions, there is that which refers to the acknowledgement and respect for *campesino* productive organizations. Assuming that a self-governing, democratic and integrated structure tends to predominate, it is suggested that rural development must not consist in the substitution of these forms of organization for others, promoted by government and its agencies or by private ones, which by disarticulating them, create conditions for the control and subjection of the *campesinos* through organizations set up from above and outside.

To recognize, respect and support organizations that *campesinos* themselves have developed means, according to this approach, taking as a point of departure, those schemes associated with the authentic par-

ticipation of *campesinos* in group decisions. With advances towards superior forms of organization, conceived of and developed by *campesinos*, they would be in a position to acquire complete control over resources and activities, in order to effectively modify their relation with other agents and undertake more ambitious projects. This implies, of course, the establishment of deep relations between productive and political *campesino* organizations, as well as the promotion of their development, strengthening and independence, based on alliances with other social classes that share their interests and projects.

EPILOGUE

The battle for rural Mexico has been long, bloody, and hard. It is far from being finished and it is not an exaggeration to say that not only the *campesinos'* destiny is a stake but that of the entire nation.

Historical experience indicates that capitalist development in agriculture has taken place in a sort of social vacuum. The *campesinos* have to be violently and radically expelled from their lands, for their place be occupied by other agents. The operation of clearing of estates* that in England transformed the peasants into available labour force for vigorous industrial development or the extermination war that was waged against the indian occupants of North America, are not casual or peculiar incidents, which can be explained in terms of determined circumstances or specific periods of those nations. They constitute the basis of the model that, with obvious variations, has characterized capitalist expansion in agriculture: and in this model as history shows and authors of the most diverse theoretical and ideological positions warn, the *campesinos* have no place, except as demolition material to construct the society to which they should incorporate themselves, ceasing to be what they are.

If the genocide process of the first century of colonial domination in New Spain had been consumated, perhaps it would have resulted in a form of productive integration similar to that of the aforementioned model. A million *campesinos*, however, survived. *Campesinos* that from then on, refused to be extinguished and that could not be absorbed in any other form, by the society to which they belonged. Today, after having suffered all kinds of aggression and forms of exploitation and having known moments of splendor and hope, the Mexican *campesinos* form a population of more than thirty million.

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* In English in the original

Moreover, when they make contact with the rest of the country's population, they easily recognize in them their brothers, children and grandchildren, who still carry the spirit of *campesino* society and culture.

In the rural towns of Mexico, a new consciousness has been forming over the years. It is clear that *campesinos* still find themselves trapped in their own prejudices and in those that urbanites have transmited to them about reality. They have not completely abandoned their local vision of the world, although mass means of communication have been tearing it apart. Their wavering between the magical-empirical logic from which they come and the scientific-technological thought to which they are directed, is an expression of dangerous ties of centuries of domination. It is not easy to articulate their models of interpretation of the world with prevailing ones, so that from this interaction a new and more complex one emerges. Within the tangle of conflicts in which their life unfolds, however, a new historical impulse seems to be working its way forward.

The *campesinos* are driven by a concrete dilemma. While they observe how the economic and social structure in which they have lived until now falls to pieces, and find themselves obliged to try their luck in a world still foreign to them, they find that this world does not offer them an option for survival and development. Although it unceasingly presents itself before them as the promised land, it becomes an unattainable goal: there is no economic, social or political space into which they can be admitted. It does not leave them any other alternative than to construct their own option.

The passiveness that they show is in many ways misleading. "It hides latent violence that threatens to explode in the phrases that, with letters of white lime, cover the walls of one of the poorest *ejidos* to the east of Morelos (in the birthplace of Zapatism): The silent *campesino* will never be heard! ".[1] They have already begun to break the silence and their voice has the propensity to turn into a shout. Accustomed to violence, their eternal companion, they know that, once turned loose, it becomes uncontrollable. Although the impatience or desperation of some is difficult to calm, most still believe it is necessary to explore different roads other than those of total violence. Or at least take the time and effort to try it.

Among the open strategies is, above all, that of alliances. The workers have changed. In the years of revolutionary momentum, red batallions from the *Casa del Obrero Mundial* contributed to the defeat of Villa and were willing to fight against the armies of Zapata. In spite of the success of their alliance with the *campesinos* in the '30s, the workers, tied to other forces, shared the fruits of progress that radically excluded the *campesinos* during the following de-

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[1] Clarisa Hardy, OP. CIT., p. 194.

cades. Still today, those that approach them to offer solidarity, often persist in the conviction that the alliance between workers and *campesinos* has to be established under the principle of inequality: the former has to direct the latter, since they do not believe them capable of representing or directing themselves or of conceiving -along with other groups— a common project of liberation. In spite of all this, new attitudes were developed amongst the city workers and the intellectuals who have identified with them. Little by little, reality is conquering prejudice. The workers are rethinking their alliance with the *campesinos*.

These are not unfounded rumours. Neither are they the expression of a project which is very far from having being elaborated. Such serious absence actually constitutes the greatest danger at the moment. "The other side" has a project underway. Perhaps they would not be able to put it in writing and give it an appropriate conceptual structure: but it is a logic that belongs to the real world and that structures of domination try to lead further away.

In spite of the difficulties described throughout this book and of what has been called "a blind alley" and in spite of inflation, unemployment, and the depth of the present crisis, Mexico is far from being a bankrupt nation. It possesses a variety of options. Some of them, however, would generate illusionary growth, would give a relaxing image of progress and would lessen —through various palliatives—, the most serious problems, to the point that after some time the serious contradiction which has been developing would inevitably explode. And that would occur under serious and dangerous conditions for the country and its inhabitants. The economic, social and political cost of this road seems of such a magnitude that the idea of consciously pursuing it becomes unsustainable. The question is centred, consequently on seriously investigating the availability of optional roads that would not have that cost.

Both the options of conventional development as well as those of the *campesinos*, are based on various fairly realistic assumptions: the need to increase internal production of generally consumed foodstuffs; the urgency of improving the situation which has been euphemistically called the "informal urban and rural sector", and above all of the *campesinos*, the need to eliminate or moderate the level of violence that is being registered in the rural areas; the convenience of amplifying and strengthening the economic, social and political organization efforts in the rural environment; the impossibility or serious limitations of a policy of high prices for the producers of basic foodstuffs as a strategy of fomenting production, in view of the need of maintaining control on consumer prices, in a highly inflationary context; the convenience of channelling a significant portion, greater than in the past, of available public resources, in particular those generated by oil, to agricultural and cattle raising activities.

This set of elements, with others of lesser importance, give food

for thought as to which road to follow. In the conventional line, although voices of the past are still heard, supporting *neolatifundismo* at all costs, advocators have tended to admit that the "modern sector" will not be able to play a prominent role in the production of basic foodstuffs, because of price limitations that affect the profitability of operation. An important role as a "modernizing agent" is attributed to it, however, so that through investments or technological and administrative transferences it would "reorganize" *campesino* production. In order to attain this, formulas of mercantile association between "modern" agents and *campesinos* are being insisted upon.

Next to this possibility, the sudden widening of State responsibility is also proposed, both in quantitative as well as qualitative terms: the government should be directly involved in production, in some cases, and in others strengthening its "support" programmes for *campesinos*, through activities that would give it greater influence over their activities and forms of organization. The massive application of subsidies for these proposals would be dedicated specifically to "favouring the labour factor". This implies, primarily, recognizing in a more or less explicit form that the "support" programmes, above all credit and commercialization, had not properly considered the *campesinos* real income; by including the latter in their economic calculation, the authorities would try to expressly anticipate within the "support" packages an equivalent of their salary, in order to encourage the interest of the *campesinos* in production and the improvement of their situation. The approach also means making more evident and therefore more liable to control, the subordination of *campesinos* labour to public capital. It includes, likewise, the characteristic accent of the last decades on the organization of the producers, with which an effort is defined that consists in adapting the *campesinos* to models of organization more in accordance with the needs and logic of official or private agents they are put in contact with. All of this, of course, would be accompanied by large social service programmes, such as in agroindustrial promotion that would adopt intensive labour patterns.

In the agrarian aspect, the conventional line suggests, at present, rapidly bringing the agrarian reform to its conclusion. On the one hand, the end of redistribution is insisted upon, noting that there is no available land for this, although some affectable areas still exist. On the other hand, it is stated that the redistributive lag of the agrarian reform should be closed, with a great effort towards regularization. Strictly speaking, nobody expects in a couple of years what has not been obtained in sixty. It is an impossible job which, besides making effective a "redistribution on paper", would require resolving land conflicts —between *campesinos* or between them and other agents— that in many cases have persisted for decades and that do not seem "solvable" under present legislation. To give an idea of what this means it is fitting to note that from 1940 to 1976 presidential resolutions were issued that redistributed 52.7 million hectares among the *campesinos*; during

this period, according to official figures, the "effective" redistribution was only of 25.6 million hectares which implies that 27 million hectares were "pending execution". This "lack of execution" is attributed to a variety of reasons, but all of them involve serious conflicts between people and groups, with no easy solution. Under such conditions, the proposition does not suggest the possibility of an irrealistic solution of "arranging" and "resolving" in a few months all that is pending. It means rather freezing the situation, as was planned in 1930 by ex-President Calles, who pointed out with a sense of urgency that what should be done is to fix a peremptory term in order that all land claims are exposed and at the end of this time "not a word more on the matter". (Another way of focusing on the "freezing" could be to observe the rhythm of redistribution, the annual average of which over the last three years represented about half of the past sixty years. This slowing down has been accompanied by the massive expedition, often careless and hasty, of individual certificates of unaffectability, such as the granting of unconstitutional concessions to the cattle raising *latifundistas* and other agents.)

The possibility of "liquidating" the problem of tenure is not senseless. The insecurity, the legal disorder and the irregularities in the redistribution process are a basic source of rural conflict and are causing serious social and economic damage. It is a fundamental *campesino* demand, that could be supported by many social groups. The problem is in terms of how to set it up. The argument that there is no more land to redistribute contradicts, above all, the historical memory of the *campesinos*. In 1950, the head of the *Departamento de Asuntos Agrarios* of the Aleman government, maintained it with equal firmness; after it was proclaimed, more than forty million hectares were redistributed "on paper" and seventeen million "effectively". Periodically the argument has been insisted upon and periodically more "redistributable" land is located. To this, should be added the *campesinos'* concrete consciousness of this situation. In each village, in each region, in each federal entity, they have found affectable land and have undertaken measures in this respect. The phrase that "there is no more land left to redistribute" means for them the rhetorical denial of the reality that they daily perceive.

"Freezing the situation", on the other hand, is also unacceptable for the *campesinos*. It would not only mean admitting that the affectable land they have identified is not being redistributed, but also accepting that the arbitrary invasion of their land, on the part of a variety of agents, is legally sanctioned. As has already been indicated, a good part of the existing conflicts did not originate from the taking of the land by the *campesinos* —although they have seen themselves compelled to such illegal recuperation— but to the constant invasion of *campesino* land, not only by agricultural and cattle raising agents, but also by the promoters of urban expansion, a process that adopts many different forms.

It is possible to conceive, however, legal and political formulas

that, without falling into unacceptable extremes for the *campesinos*, would give way to a stage of intense regularization of land tenure conditions. Its success and viability would not only be associated with a social dimension (the degree to which authentic concern for the satisfaction to the *campesino* demands is reflected), but also to the possibility of achieving at the same time, productive, economic and social development that would open a way up for the relief of the existing contradictions. In fact, it is necessary to recognize that the multitude of land tenure problems will not be "resolved" if a parallel economic formula, that would satisfy the basic demands of the *campesinos*, cannot be found. In specific areas and conditioning the redistribution —which has to be carried out at any rate— can cause a deterioration of the situation if better ways of development are not opened up at the same time. It must also be recognized that the conventional patterns of development mentioned earlier can be an effective complement to these legal and political formulas, in order to diminish the level of the existing conflict, give way to the most urgent demand of the *campesinos* and obtain important productive and economic advances. They would not be a "definite and thorough solution" of the agrarian question (is there really a solution which can be considered as such in the short run, within the prevailing productive horizon?), but they would appear as a rupture of the present impasse, as an effective way of getting out of the crisis and as a means to gain the economic and political time, necessary to try other deeper and more durable solutions, which may be thought possible as a result of the "fabulous" oil wealth.

This is the real danger: the political feasibility and the possible initial success of the barely updated conventional route. It would yield "encouraging" results in a short time. Politically effective management of the plan would permit moderating or isolating the deepest and most radical renovating impulses and would raise politically manageable hopes. It seems, furthermore, the most obvious and expedite road; for some, it appears unavoidable or at least it constitutes the most likely perspective. With a bit of luck and a little more political ability, by means of revitalizing diverse institutional apparatus of the Mexican State, it would seem possible to travel this road in the '80s without excessive difficulties and without losing the type of "stability" that has characterized Mexican society over the last fifty years.

But this is not a good road. Taking into account the facts and conditions that this book has attempted to make evident throughout, it would be a way of closing in on to economic, social and political catastrophes of incalculable consequences. It could only be travelled through a more authoritarian exercise of power, a rigid growth of Mexican society and a profound disarticulation of the fundamental organizational structures, under conditions of serious economic and social lags for the majority of the population. And the content of these phrases is not intended as sensationalism: they are intended as a warning under present conditions.

One of the essential blindspots of this project is the present conditions of the agricultural and livestock operation and its tendencies. As a new encarnation, agribusiness has been replacing the developmentalist lines of the government undertaken since 1940, and has been integrated, in strict alliance with the political and economic centres of decision, on the national as well as international level. Among the outstanding characteristics of this project are found the deepening of the conventional process of modernization, the growing subordination of the productive apparatus of the rural areas to agro-industrial demand, the substitution of cultivation patterns and urban eating habits and in particular, the exclusion of large sectors of the population from the possibility of acquiring effective demand. The scheme synthesized in the previous paragraphs seems to omit this fundamental fact. By not explicitly including it in the reflection, it is impossible to perceive that, in its development, that plan would tend to strengthen the national and multinational agribusiness project, although it will expressly seek other results. In fact, it would tend largely to favour it. With that, the advances that have been difficult to see would be denied in practice and the crisis would deepen. The logics of the subsidy would be incapable of confronting the logics of the economy. The public action would not be an option or a break in the behaviour of agribusiness but one of its main supports, as has been occurring in this period. The contradictions would incurably tend to become unmanageable. If the inherent dangers of the profound crisis[2], present at the international level as well as the national, are added, the prospects become unbearable.

Mexico, however, has another option. It is, without a doubt, as beset with difficulties as the previous one, but of a different nature. It has the substantive limitation of not having attained precision in its specific definitions, in order to integrate in a concrete organic force the pledges that form it and that have been coming forth from many spheres. However, its possibilities are undeniable. It takes up the most profound and vigorous lines of the history of the country, the historical possibilities of the project are enriched and its limits enhanced.

This other option has a common denominator with those set up by other groups of workers. Without giving up a long-term radical perspective, it proposes to promote structural transformations from now on, that lead to the root of the problems, within the horizon of a capitalist society, as the expression of a strategy of accumulation of forces. This line of reasoning does not include the hope that a series of linked reforms would by accumulation produce the

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[2] Enrique Ruíz García has been making a precise and rigorous account of the crisis, contributing with elements that allow us to characterize it, anticipate its consequences and conceive ways of confronting it. See, among others, his essays in UNO MAS UNO in 1979 and 1980, particularly April and May, 1980.

changes needed. At the same time, it firmly rejects the idea that overcoming existing contradictions will be a more or less automatically result from the sharpening of these, that is, the situation in which they become unbearable: according to this, it would only be possible "to accelerate" the process, through bold isolated actions that propitiate conditions for a "power assault" without modifying its sign. The new approach, on the other hand, considers it vital that the process be taken over in order to unravel the appropriate changes, before its own inertia makes it unmanageable or before contradictions can only be overcome at unacceptable costs. And taking over the process is not interpreted here as the necessity to construct an independent social and political organization, capable of so doing: it also includes, as a relevant feature of this organization, its capacity to influence the present as a strategy for preparing the future.

What does this *campesino* option boil down to? The land, once again. The *campesinos* already know that having it is not enough, but they also know that nothing is worse than losing it. They will fight to conquer and reconquer it a thousand times and will do so socially, collectively, communitively, with the force of a group that has refused to exchange its organic solidarity for the illusory step leading to homogenized individualism. It is the land once more, but the drive to search for it, establishes day after day, a greater distance with respect to the anarchist tradition and the liberal trap. The land belongs to those who work it, but now this work is not individual but collective. Pressures are continually felt to individualize *campesinos*, and limit them to their *ejidal*, communal or private plot of land. The *campesinos* even reproduce individualism among themselves as self-defense, as the ultimate expression of their desire to survive. At the same time, however, the very fabric of solidarity is taken up once again in the villages and the *campesinos* rediscover, together with the technicians, that the enormous efficiency and potentiality of small holdings can only be unfurled within the integration of the group, when the force of the collective organization is combined with the vitality of individual creative initiative. The *campesinos* are demanding that social agrarian reform be set in motion, in order to bring the anarchist-liberal reform to its historical conclusion.

The *campesinos* want liberty through land. What is most obvious is that repression and violence must stop. They have been discovering, however, that the logic of the coercive oppression exercised over them, is symptomatic of weakness, rather than strength. They see that the growing incapability of the dominating structures to maintain economic control over resources, through political means, impels them to use violence. As they cannot and do not always want to answer violence with violence, the *campesinos* have begun to fabricate their own political freedom: to create the organizations and negotiation areas that will permit them to resist the domination to which they are subjected, accumulating strength and setting up radical projects of transformation.

Together with political freedom, the *campesinos* demand economic liberty. And not that of the liberal demand, the failure of which they have already witnessed. Economic liberty for the *campesinos* means gradually overcoming and eventually eliminating the regulations and organic norms of the economic relations which they maintain and through which they are exploited. What has to be rejected is the "direct producer" myth together with that of the purely mercantile or financial character of their economic relations, in order to completely assume them as relations of production in which the labour and capital relation are placed, that is, in which private and public capital is the form of economic relation. If they are to be recognized as proletariat workers, the *campesinos* demand that their relations be established upon that base, and that they be submitted to the regulations and negotiation systems that historically have permitted labour to conquer its progress at the expense of capital. In this way, they would be able to suggest the modification of the sign of these relations and the substitution of agents, in order to make room for those that would be able to establish relation with them based on solidarity and not on exploitation.[3]

The consolidation and development of the *campesino* group are conditions of this economic liberty in as much as it conforms to its own patterns, traditions and organic capacities. The *campesinos* know that "producer organization" is required but they reject that it implies irrationally modifying their own organizations in order to make them fit into "bureaucratic pigeon holes", public or private. These have to adapt to the form of organization that the *campesinos* have constructed, and this must constitute the point of departure for the authentic development thrust. Instead of integrating themselves into formal organizations, that have converted them and would continue converting them into modified instruments of domination, the *campesinos* demand complete respect for the forms that historically have yielded positive results for them and in which participation and self-government for effective control of resources, can be fact and not fiction. Their organizations will truly be of a *campesino* "nature", productive, when they represent the channelling of effort towards their own land, and have a unionist nature when establishing relations with others agents under the form of wage labour. In this way, the *campesino* organization would be able to adopt the most adequate form to the mechanism of exploitation to which it is exposed, so that the unionization of agricultural workers would be more of an emanation of the *campesino* world, in touch with its realities and not with an unreal extrapolation of the urban industrial world.

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[3] There should be no mistake in this. If the relationship between the syndicate and the *campesino* group is established on the basis of gains for the former, it will be reconverted, simply, in another intermediary in the chain of agribusiness (or of capital as a whole). The worker-boss will tear up all possibility of an effective alliance.

In the new interplay of freedom, the *campesinos* have to fight basically for that of their alliances and class solidarities. On a short term basis, it has become a condition for the progress of their immediate claims. On a middle and long term basis, the deep alliances, of authentic organic content, are essential for conceiving and carrying ahead a liberation project which becomes the renewed historical construction of Mexico as a Nation.

One of the features of this option, which is barely beginning to be realized, is the conscious inclusion of the *campesinos* in the historical project. Various elements have contributed to the creation of this consciousness. On one side, the perception of the radical or complete exclusion of the *campesinos* from the initially adopted model, had to work its way up by means of machete-blows to the rhetoric that systematically maintained that they were within, and had so maintained for a long time. On the other side, the recognition of the real historical role of the *campesinos*, in the past, in the present and, above all, in the future has been a conquest of enormous importance, derived to a great extent from the action of the *campesinos* themselves that also had to break deeply rooted, theoretical and political prejudices. And there is, finally the growing conviction that all authentic determination to separate the *campesinos* from the logic of multinational agribusiness and its national partners found within the nation —to its disgrace— can only come from the *campesinos* themselves, who constitute the only present force capable of efficiently opposing it.

Step by step, with the trials, errors and characteristic set backs of a process of this nature, old alliances are reconstructed, the impious characteristic of others is recognized, the solidarity of those that found themselves dispersed, isolated and confronted is becoming stronger, and the foundations for the united construction of a new social project are being laid.

Some facts are there, as a permanent denunciation. Mexico is the 13th country in the world in population and the 14th in extension. It is found amongst the first twenty countries —that is, in certain relation with the extension and population— in relation to the generation of electric energy, gross product, kilometers of roads and highways, circulation of vehicles, telephones, mining, etc. But there are certain aspects in which the relation gets out of proportion, bringing out the disequilibrium: it is sixth in oil reserves and ninth in the production of food; at the same time, it falls below the 60th place in per capita product, doctors or hospital beds per inhabitant, life expectancy at birth and food per capita. Thus, in the country that occupies the ninth place among the producers of food in the world, half the population suffers from serious levels of malnutrition: it is underfed. The *campesinos* add to their serious calorie and protein deficit, a high degree of illiteracy and a mean school level of only 1.3 years (one tenth of the North American mean). Year after year, a million of them have to leave the country and expose themselves to all kinds of humiliations, in order to earn

a living. This is the result of the unbearable agrarian delay, that runs parallel to the insulting explosion of urban development —which is also being overwhelmed in the contradictions of its hypertrophiated cities. Mexico needs to take another road. And has what it needs to be able to do this: men as well as resources.

The new option is not a comfortable one. Nor is it secure. Perhaps not even probable. (The blindspots of the domination structure are infinite; and to make them evident, is a subtle and delicate task even when this is done with violence, using an explosive device). But what looks like a serious uncertainty for the immediate future, what seems to be an excessively optimistic and utopic enterprise -as though it were the result of excited enthusiasm rather than of the scientific foresight on which it is based— can count on the certainty of the future. It was the same certainty that was shown on December 4th, 1914, when Francisco Villa and Emiliano Zapata contracted the alliance of the Northern Division with the Southern Liberation Army. That certainty that made them say:

Zapata: *"Los campesinos le tienen mucho amor a la tierra. Todavía no lo creen cuando se les dice: 'esta tierra es tuya', creen que es un sueño..."* *

Villa: *"Ya verán cómo el pueblo es el que manda y el que va a ver quienes son sus amigos..."* **

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* "The *campesinos* have much love for the land. They still don't believe it when you tell them: 'this land is yours', they think that it is a dream..."

** "Now they will see how the people is in command and it will find out who its friends are..."

APPENDIX 1
DATA ON THE MEXICAN RURAL SECTOR

TABLE 1

MEXICO'S POPULATION, 1521-1978

YEAR	INHABITANTS	YEAR	INHABITANTS
1521	9 120 000	1880	5 577 279
1793	4 483 680	1892	11 502 583
1803	5 764 731	1900	13 607 259
1810	6 122 354	1910	15 160 369
1820	6 204 000	1920	14 334 780
1830	7 996 000	1930	16 552 722
1842	7 016 300	1940	19 653 552
1852	7 661 919	1950	25 791 017
1861	8 212 579	1960	34 923 129
1871	9 097 056	1970	48 225 238
		1978	66 943 976*

* Estimated figure.

Source: Anuario Estadístico de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos, 1975-1976, S.P.P., 1979, and La Población de México, su Ocupación y sus Niveles de Bienestar, S.P.P., 1979.

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SITION OF THE MEXICAN POPULATION
1 Population Percentages)

TOTAL POPULATION	MEN %	WOMEN %	ECONOMICALLY ACTIVE POPULATION %	ECONOMICALLY INACTIVE POPULATION %	RURAL POPULATION %	URBAN POPULATION %
16 552 722	49.0	51.0	31.2	68.8	66.5	33.5
19 653 552	49.3	50.7	29.8	70.2	64.9	35.1
25 791 017	49.2	50.8	32.3	33.1	57.4	42.6
34 923 129	49.8	50.2	32.4	41.3	49.3	50.7
48 225 238	49.9	50.1	26.8	33.4	37.9	62.1
66 943 976	48.9	51.1	27.5	35.7	-	-

mated figures

e: VII, VIII and IX Censo Nacional de Población, Secretaría de la Presidencia, 1950, 1960 and 1970; La Población de México, su Ocupación y sus Niveles de Bienestar, S.P.P., 1979.

TABLE 3
AVERAGE FAMILY INCOME: BY SOURCE AND LEVEL OF INCOME

MONTHLY FAMILY INCOME			NUMBER OF FAMILIES	PERCENTAGE OF FAMILIES	AVERAGE FAMILY INCOME
Total			10 208 925	100.0	3 260.37
0			16 547	0.2	*
1	-	500	1 533 407	15.0	215.98
501	-	700	578 756	5.7	606.03
701	-	950	794 472	7.8	828.68
951	-	1250	889 555	8.7	1 099.01
1251	-	1700	918 944	9.0	1 479.17
1701	-	2200	1 063 504	10.4	1 967.04
2201	-	3000	1 249 808	12.2	2 610.93
3001	-	4000	865 596	8.5	3 519.67
4001	-	5200	695 026	6.8	4 584.26
5201	-	7000	625 835	6.1	6 024.41
7001	-	9200	345 941	3.4	7 987.63
9201	-	12250	282 537	2.8	10 531.41
12251	and	over	348 997	3.4	24 385.46

* Insufficient sample information to estimate average.

Fuente: La Población de México, su Ocupación y sus Niveles de Bienestar, S.P.P., 1979.

TABLE 3 (Cont.)
AVERAGE FAMILY INCOME: BY SOURCE AND LEVEL OF INCOME

MONTHLY FAMILY INCOME			INCOME SOURCE						
			Wages and salaries a/	From private non-agricultural enterprises	From agricultural and cattle enterprises	From Operations in fixed and rotating capital	From Operations in capital goods	From Transfer Payments	Unforseen unexpected circunstancial
Total			2 072.83	510.68	280.95	183.46	11.89	170.36	30.21
	0		*	*	*	*	*	*	*
1	-	500	58.01	33.55	99.26	1.28	0.67	23.22	0.01
501	-	700	248.11	79.09	227.38	2.58	0.0	48.47	0.41
701	-	950	388.50	120.43	264.68	4.66	0.0	50.02	0.41
951	-	1250	611.38	221.84	174.89	6.48	2.38	81.91	0.16
1251	-	1700	996.30	210.88	161.30	6.00	0.05	103.43	1.24
1701	-	2200	1 412.91	255.84	159.60	19.75	2.59	115.93	0.44
2201	-	3000	1 902.71	354.56	214.51	15.80	3.76	117.48	2.12
3001	-	4000	2 564.56	469.92	325.72	21.85	1.35	131.93	4.36
4001	-	5200	3 403.94	629.71	369.68	18.29	4.95	149.03	8.68
5201	-	7000	4 777.12	551.61	384.48	49.96	25.65	223.55	12.05
7001	-	9200	6 206.31	1 199.20	256.15	119.32	38.47	167.12	1.08
9201	-	12250	6 942.30	1 920.21	347.38	253.11	27.13	1 005.19	36.09
12251	and	over	10 304.67	5 063.80	1 908.94	4 693.50	198.07	1 427.83	789.38

* Insufficient sample information to estimate average.

a) The reduced participation of wages and salaries in low level family income can be explained by the fact that a great amount of families whose head works for himself does not have a fixed salary in his business or enterprise and the income of these families are computed as income from private interprise business. Most of them are small merchants, retail salesman, small service and small farmers.

Source: La Población de México, su Ocupación y sus Niveles de Bienestar, S.P.P., 1979.

TABLE 4
CHARACTERISTICS AND USE OF THE SOIL IN MEXICO, 1970.
(In percentages)

REGION	Agricultural total				Total economic area *			
	Crops							
	Seasonal use land	Irrigated	Perennial	Agricultural	Pasture	Forests	Productive Uncultivated Land	Bound to be Exploited
				Total				
Desertic and Semidesertic	15.2	6.3	2.0	3.5 23.5	34.5	8.7	2.7	1.4
Temperate	19.0	3.9	2.5	3.7 25.9	4.2	3.6	0.1	0.2
Dry Tropical	13.7	3.9	3.0	3.0 20.6	6.0	5.6	0.9	1.2
Humed Tropical	13.5	0.6	15.8	4.4 29.9	3.2	10.7	0.3	0.9
Total	61.4	14.7	23.3	14.6 100	47.9	28.6	4.0	3.7

* Refered to forest, agriculture and cattle sectors.

Source: Programa de Desarrollo Agropecuario y Forestal, Consejo Nacional de Ciencia y Tecnología, México, 1979.

TABLE 5
GENERATION OF AGRICULTURAL VALUE BY CROP AND AREA CULTIVATED 1970 - 1978.
(In percentages)

Product	Sesame	Alfalfa	Cotton	Rice	Oats	Peanuts	Safflower	Barley	Onions	Green peas	Dry chile	Green chile	Straw-berries
Percentage of Occupied Area	1.57	1.45	2.86	0.77	0.41	0.36	1.9	1.18	0.15	0.12	0.18	0.35	0.04
Percentage Participation in value (%)	1.0	4.5	9.4	2.5	1.16	1.33	2.0	0.8	1.5	0.16	0.6	0.16	3.5

Product	Beans	Broad beans	Tomatoes	Linseed	Corn	Melon	Potatoes	Pine-apple	Water-melon	Sorghum	Soy beans	Tobacco	Wheat
Percentage of Occupied Area	11.74	0.40	0.44	0.09	50.87	0.12	0.37	0.06	0.18	8.56	1.67	0.29	5.36
Percentage Participation in value (%)	6.2	0.15	4.3	0.11	20.0	0.5	0.16	0.3	0.5	7.9	2.3	1.17	6.2

Product	Avocados	Cocoa	Coffee	Plums	Orly Coconut	Peaches	Henequen	Limes	Mangos	Apples	Oranges	Bananas	Grapes
Percentage of Occupied Area	0.42	0.54	2.63	0.05	0.07	0.18	1.33	0.32	0.24	0.21	1.14	0.39	0.18
Percentage Participation in value (%)	2.0	0.06	5.75	0.15	0.06	1.0	3.6	0.6	1.5	1.3	2.3	1.3	1.3

Source: Consumos Aparentes, DGEA - SARH; 3er. Informe de Gobierno, J.L.P., Anexos, S.P.P., 1979.

TABLE 6

LIVESTOCK
Species relative share
(Percentages).

YEAR	BOVINE	EQUINE	PORCINE	OVINE	CAPRINE	ASININE	MULES	AMOUNT OF HEADS (In Thousands)
1965	39.1	9.0	16.5	12.5	13.8	5.3	3.5	58165357
1966	38.8	9.1	16.4	12.2	13.6	4.8	4.9	60440725
1967	38.9	9.1	16.4	11.8	13.5	5.1	4.9	61133583
1968	38.6	9.2	16.1	12.5	13.0	5.2	5.0	61585117
1969	37.3	9.2	16.7	12.3	14.0	5.2	5.0	62323598
1970	39.1	9.1	16.1	12.0	13.5	5.0	4.9	65195448
1971	39.5	9.0	16.1	11.9	13.4	5.0	4.9	66458250
1972	40.2	9.0	16.0	12.0	12.7	4.9	4.8	67196003
1973	40.0	8.9	16.2	11.9	13.2	4.7	4.8	68656178
1974	39.1	9.6	16.4	11.8	12.9	4.9	4.9	66101638
1975	40.5	9.2	16.5	11.8	12.3	4.7	4.7	70000394
1976	41.2	9.1	17.0	11.2	11.9	4.6	4.6	70125945
1977	41.4	9.1	17.3	11.1	11.6	4.6	4.5	70523280

Source: Manual de Estadísticas Básicas (Sector Agropecuario y Forestal) S.P.P., 1978.

TABLE 7

COMERCIAL BALANCE: AGRICULTURAL, CATTLE RAISING AND FORESTRY.

YEAR	EXPORTS	IMPORTS	NET
1960	5 169	341	4 828
1965	8 165	872	7 293
1970	8 424	1 487	6 927
1971	8 334	1 586	6 748
1972	10 569	2 317	8 252
1973	12 083	3 178	8 905
1974	12 019	11 361	658
1975	10 926	10 771	155
1976	13 761	6 584	7 168
1977 P/	29 779	18 224	11 555 1/
1978 P/	12 909	8 233	4 676

P/ Preliminary figures

1/ In order to quote the export and import values a monthly average of the peso exchange rate with relation to the dollar was used.

Source: Banco de México, J.A. Informes Anuales. Dirección General de Estadística, S.P.P.

TABLE 8
LAND REDISTRIBUTED: REAL AND NOMINAL 1916-1979.

PRESIDENT	PERIOD	NUMBER OF ENDOWED EJIDOS	REDISTRIBUTION BY PRESIDENTIAL RESOLUTION HECTARES	REAL REDISTRIBUTION HECTARES	NUMBER OF BENEFITIARIES BY PRESIDENTIAL RESOLUTION	NUMBER OF BENEFITIARIES BY DIRECT REAL REDISTRIBUTION	ANNUAL AVERAGE FOR REAL REDISTRIBUTION HECTARES	AVERAGE REAL DISTRIBUTION BY EJIDATARIO	BALANCE BETWEEN REAL AND NOMINAL REDISTRIBUTIONS
Venustiano Carranza	1916-1920	334	-	381 926	-	77 203	76 385	4.9	-
Alvaro Obregón	1921-1924	759	-	1 715 581	-	161 788	428 895	10.6	-
Plutarco Elías C.	1925-1928	1 667	-	3 173 149	-	301 587	793 267	10.5	-
Emilio Portes Gil	1929	865	-	1 850 532	-	126 317	1 850 532	14.6	-
Pascual Ortiz Rubio	1930-1932	1 041	-	1 492 308	-	117 091	497 436	12.7	-
Abelardo Rodríguez	1933-1934	1 585	-	2 047 196	-	158 139	1 023 598	13.0	-
Lázaro Cárdenas	1935-1940	11 347	17 906 430	20 074 704	811 157	771 640	3 345 784	25.8	+11.7*
Manuel Avila C.	1941-1946	2 768	5 994 450	5 286 636	157 836	110 712	881 106	47.6	-11.8
Miguel Alemán	1947-1952	1 726	4 844 123	3 129 285	97 391	74 644	521 547	42.0	-35.4
Adolfo Ruíz C.	1953-1958	1 094	4 936 665	3 469 958	230 888	55 292	578 326	62.8	-30.6
Adolfo López Mateos	1959-1964	-	11 361 270	3 162 796	304 801	202 620	527 133	15.6	-72.5
Gustavo Díaz Ordaz	1965-1970	-	14 139 469	4 120 530	246 695	320 000	686 755	12.8	-70.9
Luis Echeverría A.	1971-1976	3 925	11 567 644	6 516 262	186 024	289 934	1 086 044	22.5	-43.4
José López Portillo	1977-1979	1 566	-	753 689	-	133 598	251 230	5.7	-
TOTAL		28 677	70 700 051	57 174 552	2 034 792	2 900 565	236 755.43	21.5	-36.1

* The positive sign (+), expresses a greater real distribution than that demanded by presidental resolution. The negativ sign (-), expresses a groater nominal than real distribution.

Source: Fernández Luis. "Colectivización Ejidal y Cambio Rural en México", Memorias del Departamento Agrario, Anuarios Estadísticos de la S.P.P. 3er. Informe de Gobierno J.L.P., Anexos, S.P.P., 1979.

TABLE 9
COMPOSITION SERVICES ON THE LAND
(Thousands of hectares)

YEAR	CULTIVATED LAND	AREA WITH TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE	LAND UNDER SEASONAL USE	IRRIGATED LAND	FERTILIZED IRRIGATED LAND	MECHANIZED IRRIGATED LAND
1965	12 751	-+	10 772	1 979	-	1 833
1966	13 680	-	11 793	1 886	1 341	1 091
1967	12 542	-	10 376	2 165	1 168	1 068
1968	12 772	-	10 651	2 127	1 278	1 050
1969	12 110	-	9 926	2 183	1 405	1 142
1970	12 462	-	10 480	1 982	1 320	1 209
1971	12 845	-	10 630	2 215	1 545	1 258
1972	12 132	-	9 984	2 147	1 418	1 234
1973	13 052	1 088	10 891	2 160	1 267	1 427
1974	12 245	1 354	9 877	2 367	1 493	1 602
1975	12 720	3 129	10 358	2 362	1 440	2 026
1976	12 016	2 764	9 516	2 499	1 625	1 900
1977	13 124	3 469	10 339	2 784	1 592	2 041
1978	14 438	3 720	11 261	3 176	1 874	2 321

+ No data available
Source: Manual de Estadísticas Básicas- Sector Agropecuario y Forestal, S.P.P., 1978 and 3rd. Informe de Gobierno, José López Portillo (J.L.P.), Anexos S.P.P. - 1979.

TABLE 10

AREAS IRRIGATED WITH GOVERNMENT PROVIDED INFRASTRUCTURE
1926-1979*
(hectares)

YEAR	ACCUMULATED AREA	ANNUAL AREA
1926-1946	827 425	
1947	947 732	120 307
1948	1 052 063	104 331
1949	1 134 538	82 475
1950	1 198 297	63 759
1951	1 250 964	54 667
1952	1 452 937	199 973
1953	1 595 920	142 983
1954	1 747 976	152 056
1955	1 888 071	140 095
1956	2 048 925	160 854
1957	2 133 429	84 504
1958	2 211 237	77 808
1959	2 236 838	25 601
1960	2 278 074	41 236
1961	2 320 800	42 726
1962	2 357 403	36 603
1963	2 418 581	61 178
1964	2 456 095	37 514
1965	2 492 085	35 990
1966	2 553 219	61 134
1967	2 610 416	57 197
1968	2 696 707	86 291
1969	2 784 635	87 928
1970	2 838 800	54 161
1971	2 920 553	81 753
1972	3 012 526	91 973
1973	3 077 882	65 356
1974	3 197 656	119 774
1975	3 349 133	151 477
1976	3 623 946	274 813
1977	3 772 291	148 345
1978	4 051 284	278 993
1979 e/	4 223 723	172 439

* Rehabilited areas are not included.
e/ Preliminary Data.
Source: Secretaría de Agricultura y Recursos Hidráulicos. Informes de Labores.

TABLE 11
GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF CFFICIAL CREDIT TO THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR: BY TYPE OF CREDIT
(Amount in Million of Pesos)

	Short Term	Long Term	Total	%	Short Term	Long Term	Total	%
Aguascalientes	13.3	19.3	33.6	1.1	101.6	30.7	132.3	0.7
Baja Calif. Norte	164.7	5.0	169.7	5.9	910.4	46.5	956.9	5.4
Baja Calif. Sur	9.4	7.2	16.6	5.7	195.3	11.0	206.3	1.1
Campeche	24.1	11.1	32.2	1.1	212.2	5.1	217.3	1.2
Coahuila	153.2	29.2	182.4	6.3	860.8	98.5	959.3	5.4
Colima	24.5	9.7	34.1	1.2	129.0	6.2	135.2	0.7
Chiapas	98.2	26.0	124.2	4.3	645.8	54.7	700.5	4.0
Chihuahua	80.5	9.2	89.7	3.1	754.1	133.5	887.6	5.0
Durango	163.4	27.6	191.0	6.6	1,059.1	92.2	1,151.3	6.4
Guanajuato	64.7	29.7	94.4	3.3	678.0	223.2	901.2	5.0
Guerrero	19.2	2.1	21.3	0.7	404.2	4.7	408.9	2.3
Hidalgo	8.6	1.1	9.7	0.3	17.0	15.1	32.1	0.2
Jalisco	62.1	11.3	73.4	2.5	732.3	110.5	842.8	4.7
México	9.2	5.4	14.6	0.5	731.2	33.3	764.5	4.2
Michoacán	209.9	45.5	255.4	8.8	857.3	84.2	941.5	5.3
Morelos	41.0	3.5	44.5	1.5	203.3	31.3	234.6	1.3
Nayarit	59.8	7.4	67.2	2.3	344.8	82.7	427.5	2.4
Nuevo León	6.7	2.3	9.0	0.3	184.4	36.6	221.0	1.2
Oaxaca	74.3	24.3	98.6	3.4	362.0	45.4	407.4	2.3
Puebla	31.9	9.1	41.0	1.3	212.9	29.5	242.4	1.3
Querétaro	8.7	4.3	13.0	0.4	93.7	36.5	130.2	0.7
Quintana Roo	9.8	2.7	12.5	0.4	91.3	48.1	139.4	0.8
San Luis Potosí	16.4	10.7	27.1	0.9	194.4	140.0	334.4	1.8
Sinaloa	378.5	29.2	407.7	14.1	1,001.8	211.8	1,213.6	6.8
Sonora	206.4	42.4	248.8	8.6	1,952.5	238.3	2,190.8	12.3
Tabasco	7.8	29.2	37.0	1.2	62.1	20.6	82.7	0.5
Tamaulipas	91.3	13.4	104.7	3.6	1,277.2	-	1,277.2	7.1
Tlaxcala	6.1	2.8	8.9	0.3	66.7	8.3	75.0	0.4
Veracruz	38.8	19.1	57.9	2.0	758.0	41.5	799.5	4.5
Yucatán	209.7	96.8	306.4	10.6	92.8	179.1	271.9	1.5
Zacatecas	24.9	34.6	59.5	2.1	488.8	65.8	554.6	3.1
Totals	2,317.1	571.2	2,888 6	100.0	15,675.0	2,164.9	17,839.9	100.0

Source: Manual de Estadísticas Básicas (Sector Agropecuario y Forestal) S.P.P, 1978.

APPENDIX 2
SUGGESTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

1.- Statistical Information:

As pointed out in the Preface, the statistical information available on rural Mexico is notably deficient. This will only be corrected through the Agricultural and Livestock Census, planned for 1981.

An excellent critical analysis of the situation can be found in Yates P.L. "Apéndice Estadístico", El Campo Mexicano, (E.E.C, 1978)*

The "Secretaría de Programación y Presupuesto", periodically publishes the currently available basic statistical information. The following publications are available for studying rural matters:

Manual de Estadísticas Básicas (Sector Agropecuario y Forestal);

Manuales de Información Básica de la Nación (Cómo es México y la Población de México, su Ocupación y sus Niveles de Bienestar);

Anuario Estadístico de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos;

Agenda Estadística, 1979;

Encuesta Nacional de Ingresos y Gastos de los Hogares, 1977;

Niveles de Fecundidad en México, 1960 - 1974;

Proyecciones de Población en México, 1970 - 2000;

*The abbreviations of publishers are explained at the end of this Appendix.

Cartas (geographical, geological, use of soils, potential use of soils, turistic, etc.)

The Secretaría also publishes a monthly "Gaceta Informativa" with up to date data on its publications, to obtain it, (as well as back-numbers), write to the following address:

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México 1, D.F.
Tel. 551-87-80

The Dirección General de Economía Agrícola of the Secretaría de Agricultura y Recursos Hidráulicos (Leibnitz 20 - 10°piso, Mexico 5, D.F.) publishes a weekly Boletín Interno, as well as a monthly magazine Econotecnia Agrícola, with valuable statistical information and monographic studies.

The Secretaría also has plenty of information available acquired during the design of the Plan Nacional Hidráulico. It also has the sampling survey results and other studies made by different departments of the Secretaría.

Recently it published an Anuario Estadístico which contains the information used as a basis for the "Plan Nacional Agropecuario de 1980".

The Secretaría Técnica of the Gabinete Agropecuario has compiled information on rural Mexico, part of which has been published in a bulletin of limited circulation. Other institutions of the agricultural and cattle raising sector in particular the "Banco Nacional de Crédito Rural" and "CONASUPO", have a valuable stock of information in this field.

Finally, Reyes Osorio S. et. al Estructura Agraria y Desarrollo Agrícola en México, F.C.E, 1974, is still a fundamental reference, both for informative and analytic material.

2. Historical Information:

For general historic insight see the collection of Problemas Agrícolas e Industriales de México, in which important studies on rural Mexico by both foreigner (Chevalier, Mc Cutchen, Mc Bride, Turner, Tannebaum, Wetten, etc.) and Mexican researchers appear.

With regard to Mexican Agrarianism, the books by Jesús Silva Herzog,

Emeritus Professor of the School of Economics of the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, are indispensable. In particular see:

La Reforma Agraria en México y en Algunos Otros Países (author's edition, 1934);

El Agrarismo Mexicano y la Reforma Agraria (FCE, 1959);

El Mexicano y su Morada (CA, 1960);

Trayectoria Ideológica de la Revolución Mexicana (CA, 1963);

Inquietud sin tregua, ensayos y artículos escogidos 1937-1965 (CA, 1965).

Silva Herzog himself coordinated the Colección de folletos para la historia de la Revolución Mexicana, published by the Instituto Mexicano de Investigaciones Económicas, of which it is worth mentioning the four volumes on La Cuestión de la Tierra.

In the Colección de Fuentes para la Historia de la Revolución Mexicana, F.C.E., 1955 and following years, some original documents of the period are reproduced, of which some, such as plans, speeches, manifests, etc., are directly related to the agrarian issue.

Enrique Florescano published a Bibliografía del Maíz, C. 1972, which contains a rigorous scientific compilation. The same author also published Origen y Desarrollo de los Problemas Agrarios de México, 1500-1821, Era, 1976. Also of interest is Frank A.G., La Agricultura Mexicana 1521 - 1630 - CEPAENAH, 1976.

For studies on Zapata and Zapatismo reference must be made to:

Magaña, G. Gral., Emiliana Zapata y el Agrarismo en México (LER, 1975).

Womack, J., Zapata y la Revolución Mexicana (S XXI, 1974).

A. Orive Alba's La Irrigación en México - G, 1970 gives a most interesting insight into rural history.

3. The Indian Issue

In INI, 30 años después, revisión crítica INI, 1979, the Instituto Nacional Indigenista (Ave. Revolución 1279, México 19, D.F.), got together a number of classical and recent texts related to the Indian issue. The Instituto has also published a great variety of texts on this subject. Among these, R. Pozas "Chamula" INI, 1977, can still be considered a model for research and analytic penetration.

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4. Agrarian Reform

The work of Reyes Osorio and Silva Herzog quoted above, deals extensively with this subject. They continue to be of interest but, are beginning to be out dated.

De la Peña, M.T., Mito y Realidad de la Reforma Agraria en México (CA, 1964);

Durán, M.A., El Agrarismo Mexicano (S XXI, 1967);

Fernández and Fernández, R., Economía Agrícola y Reforma Agraria, (CEMLA, 1962) and

Romero Espinosa, E., La Reforma Agraria en México (CA, 1963).

Also see:

Reyes Osorio, S. y et. al, Reforma Agraria, Tres Ensayos (CENAPRO, 1969);

Restrepo I. and Sánchez J., La Reforma Agraria en Cuatro Regiones, (SS, 1972) and

Gutelman, M., Capitalismo y Reforma Agraria en México (Era, 1974).

More than ten years ago Jorge Martínez Ríos prepared a basic reference work on the subject: Tenencia de la Tierra y Desarrollo Agrario en México, (Bibliografía selectiva y comentada), (IIS, 1970).

5.- Current Situation.

Some specialized magazines have collected statistical information reports of direct research results as well as analytical and theoretical essays. See in particular:

Comercio Exterior;

Cuadernos Agrarios;

Narxhí - Nandhá (Revista de economía campesina):

Nueva Antropología y

Revista del México Agrario.

There are also articles on the subject in:

Demografía y Economía,

Cuadernos de Discusión

Cuadernos Políticos;

Estrategia,

Historia y Sociedad;

Investigación Económica;

Problemas del Desarrollo;

Revista Mexicna de Sociología y

Revista Mexicana de Ciencias Políticas y Sociales

Also in the publications of the Centro de Estudios Sociológicos de El Colegio de México.

Among the books published in Mexico during the last ten years, it is worth while pointing out the following:

Astorga, L., E. and Hardy, C. Organización, Lucha y Dependencia Económica (NI, 1978);

Aguilar, C.H., La Frontera Nómada: Sonora y la Revolución Mexicana, (S XXI, 1977).

Barbosa, A.R., Empleo, desempleo y subempleo en el Sector Agropecuario (CIA, 1976);

Barkin, D., Desarrollo Regional y Reorganización Campesina (NI, 1978);

Bartra, A., Notas sobre la Cuestión Campesina (México 1970-1976) (EM, 1979);

Bartra, R., Estructura Agraria y Clases Sociales en México (Era, 1978);

Bartra, R., et. al. Caciquismo y Poder Político en el México Rural - (S XXI, 1975);

Echenique, J., Crédito y Desarrollo Agrícola en México (1940-1978) (NI, 1980);

Feder, E., El Imperialismo Fresa (EC, 1977);

Espín, J. and Leonardo P. of Economía y Sociedad en Los Altos de Jalisco (NI, 1978);

Fernández,L. and Fernández,M.T. of Colectivización Ejidal y Cambio Rural en México (UAJT, 1977);

Gómez J.F., El Movimiento Campesino en México (EC, 1970);

Gómez O., L., Economía Campesina y Acumulación de Capital (NI, 1980);

Huizer, G., La Lucha Campesina en México (CIA, 1979);

Jáuregui, J. et al. Tabamex: Un Caso de Integración Vertical de la Agricultura (NI, 1979);

Montañez, C. and Aburto, H., Maiz, Política Institucional y Crísis Agrícola (NI, 1979);

Navarrete, I.M. de, Bienestar Campesino y Desarrollo Económico(FCE, 1971);

Oswald, O., Serrano, J. and Luna, Laurentino,Cooperativas Ejidales y Capitalismo Dependiente (UNAM, 1979);

Oswald, O. et. al. Mercado y Dependencia (NI, 1979);

Paré L., El Proletariado Agrícola en México: ¿Campesinos sin Tierra o Proletarios Agrícolas? (S XXI, 1979);

Restrepo I. and Eckstein, S., La Agricultura Colectiva en México, (S XXI, 1975);

Restrepo I. et al. Los Problemas de la Organización Campesina (EC, 1975);

Sánchez B., G., La Región Fundamental de Economía Campesina en México (NI, 1980);

Stavenhagen R., Las Clases Sociales en las Sociedades Agrarias (S XXI, 1971)

Stavenhagen, R., Sociología y Subdesarrollo (ENT, 1972);

Stavenhagen, R. et al. Capitalismo y Campesinado en México (SI, 1976);

Villa Issa, M., El Mercado de Trabajo y la Adopción de Tecnología Nueva de Producción Agrícola: El Caso del Plan Puebla (CPCH, 1977);

Warman, A., Los Campesinos, Hijos Predilectos del Régimen (NT, 1973)

Warman, A., ... Y Venimos a Contradecir (ECCH, 1976);

Warman, A. et. al. Los Campesinos en la Tierra de Zapata (SI, 1974).

NOTES:

1. Criteria for selection. Only texts published in Spanish in Mexico have been included in this suggested bibliography. Texts based on direct research were given priority when selection from publications of the last decade was made. Books easily available in the bookstores were also given priority (with some clear exceptions), as for example the magazine Problemas Agrícolas e Industriales de México and some studies by Silva Herzog only available in libraries.

2. Reference Centres. Not all research centres and government offices related to rural matters, or specialized libraries offer reference facilities for consulting their materials.

As well as large libraries (Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Banco de México, Secretaría de Hacienda, Archivo General de la Nación, etc.), which have large sections dedicated to rural issues, there are other sources available in the Universidad Autónoma de Chapingo (Texcoco, Méx.), in the Centro de Investigaciones Agrarias (Lázaro Cárdenas #28, 5° Piso, México 1, D.F.), in the Centro de Estudios Sociológicos del Colegio de México (Camino al Ajusco No. 20, México), in the office in Mexico of the Comisión Económica para la América Latina of the U.N.O., (Presidente Mazarik 29-13, México D. F.,and in the Comité Promotor de Investigaciones para el Desarrollo Rural (Minerva 60, Méx. D.F.)

3. Publisher's Abbreviations

C	CONASUPO
CA	Cuadernos Americanos
CEMLA	Centro de Estudios Monetarios Lationamericanos
CENAPRO	Centro Nacional de Productividad
CIA	Centro de Investigaciones Agrarias
CPAENAH	Comité de Publicaciones de los Alumnos de la Escuela Nacional de Antropología e Historia
CPCH	Colegio de Postgraduados de Chapingo
EC	Editorial Campesina
ECCH	Ediciones de la Casa Chata
EEC	Ediciones El Caballito
EM	Editorial Macehual
SXXI	Siglo XXI Editores
UAJT	Universidad Autónoma Juárez de Tabasco

APPENDIX 3
INSTITUTIONS OR ACADEMIC CENTRES RELATED TO RURAL ISSUES

Centro ee Capacitación para Programas de Desarrollo Agrícola en Areas de Puebla, Pue.
Centro de Ecodesarrollo
Centro de Investigación de Desarrollo Ovino
Centro de Investigaciones Agrícolas de la Mesa Central
Centro de Investigaciones de la Península de Yucatán
Centro de Investigaciones Agrícolas del Noroeste
Centro de Investigaciones Agrícolas del Noreste
Centro de Investigaciones Agrícolas de Sinaloa
Centro de Investigaciones Agrícolas del Sureste
Centro de Investigaciones Agrícolas del Tamaulipas
Centro de Investigaciones para el Desarrollo Rural
Centro Internacional de Mejoramiento de Maíz y Trigo
Consejo Nacional de Ciencia y Tecnología
Centro Nacional de Productividad
Colegio de Postgraduados en Chapingo
Colegio Superior de Agricultura Tropical
Comité Promotor de Investigaciones para el Desarrollo Rural
El Colegio de México
Escuela de Agricultura de la Universidad de Guadalajara
Escuela de Agricultura de la Universidad de Guerrero
Escuela de Agricultura de la Universidad de Michoacán

Escuela de Agricultura de la Universidad de Nuevo León

Escuela de Agricultura de la Universidad de Sonora

Escuela de Roque, Gto.

Escuela de Agricultura del Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey

Escuela Nacional de Antropología

Escuela Particular de Agricultura de Ciudad Juárez

Escuela Superior de Agricultura, Culiacán, Sin.

Escuela Superior de Agricultura Antonio Narro, Saltillo, Coah.

Escuela Superior de Agricultura "Hermanos Escobar"

Escuela Superior de Agricultura y Zootecnia, Gómez Palacio, Dgo.

Fondo de Cultura Campesina

Instituto de Investigaciones sobre Recursos Bióticos

Instituto Mexicano de Estudios Sociales

Instituto Mexicano de Investigaciones Tecnológicas

Instituto Mexicano de Recursos Renovables

Instituto Mexicano del Café

Instituto Nacional de Investigaciones Agrícolas

Instituto Nacional de Investigaciones Forestales

Instituto Nacional de Investigaciones Pecuarias

Instituto Nacional Indigenista

Instituto Nacional para el Desarrollo de la Comunidad Rural y de la Vivienda

Instituto para el Mejoramiento de la Producción de Azúcar

Instituto Politécnico Nacional

Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Occidente

Universidad Autónoma Agraria "Antonio Narra"

Universidad Autónoma de Chapingo

Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana

Universidad Iberoamericana

Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México.

GLOSSARY

Agiotista.- Moneylender.

Agrarista.- Agrarian activits.

Almud.- A dry measure, about 0.8 of a litre — of land, about half acre.

Amo.- Master, head (of household or family), owner, boss.

Amparo.- Legal recourse against actions of authorities considered to be unjust. An 'amparo' stays the legal process until the propriety of an action can be considered by a judge. In agrarian matters 'amparos' are usually invoked against presidential grants of land.

Avecindados.- Those who cultivate land under different systems of land tenure according to agreements with the community, individually or collectively, but are not covered by any legal definition.

Avío.- Short term credit for cultivation. It only covers direct production costs, and this usually only partially.

Banco de Crédito Rural.- Rural Credit Bank.

Banco Nacional de Crédito Agrícola.- National Agricultural Credit Bank.

Braceros.- Mexican peasants migrating as temporary agricultural workers to the United States.

Cacicazgo.- A form of domination in which economic, social and political power is concentrated in only one person, family or group.

Cacique.- Generic term, colloquially used to refer to the local agent who represents, and operates the dominating structures. In the

text it is suggested that he is an economic agent, an intermediary between the campesinos and capital. He carries out different social and political functions which are reproduced by capital and at the same time strengthen it.

Callismo.- President Plutarco Elías Calles' doctrine.

Campesino.- A peasant, whose productive activity is subordinated to capital and inserted in its logic, within a labour organization that functions under its own internal logics, intimately related to the requirements of working the land. Generally the peasantry maintains strong community structures with informal organizations based on solidarity relationships. They also tend to diversify their productive and service activities. Generally they directly hire their labour force for a salary. (They are not considered salaried workers here, due to the fact that their own contribution has a decisive impact in the annual logic of their reproduction.) They are considered as constituting a specific social class within the capitalist society. They are of proletarian nature but analytically distinguishable from industrial or agricultural workers, because of the specificity of the exploitative mechanisms they are subjected to, and also because of the nature of the social contradictions that define their existence.

Casco.- The main living quarters of an 'hacienda'.

Casilla.- Place to live, shared by peons, as a complement to their salary.

Casta.- Caste — a system of rigid social stratification characterized by hereditary statues, endogamy, and social barriers sanctioned by custom, law or/and religion.

Centavos.- Cents.

Central Campesina Independiente (CCI).- Independent Peasant Central.

Centro Internacional de Mejoramiento del Maíz y el Trigo (CIMMYT).- International Centre for the Improvement of Corn and Wheat Production.

Código Agrario.- Agrarian Code.

Colectivados.- Peasants organized in a collective manner, according to different modalities and purposes.

Colonia.- A system of domination established by the Spanish crown in America, including the territory currently occupied by Mexico. The 'colonial' period in the history of Mexico runs from the beginning of the XVI century until 1810. The 'colonia agrícola' is a specific regime of land tenure encouraged mainly during the 1940s. It was part of the land colonization programmes. It was an alternative to

the 'ejido' and the small private holdings, although quite similar to the latter. It is regulated by an adhoc constitutional law.

Colono.- Owner of a piece of land in a 'colonia agrícola' (see supra).

Comisariado de Bienes Comunales.- The authority in an Indian community, formally elected by the 'comuneros' according to terms stipulated by law. His role and status depend on his relationship with the non-legally recognized but actual authorities of the community. He is therefore a manifestation of the intromission of external forces within the community.

Comisariado Ejidal.- The maximum authority of an 'ejido', formally elected by 'ejidatarios' according to terms stipulated by law. Frequently he carries out functions which differ from those legally assigned to him. His class origin and his political role depend on the correlation of forces within a local, regional or national perspective.

Comisión Agraria Mixta.- Mixed Agrarian Commission.

Comisión Nacional de la Industria del Maíz para Consumo Humano.- National Commission of the Corn Industry for Human Consumption.

Comisión Nacional del Maíz.- National Corn Commission.

Comisión para el Incremento y Distribución de Semillas Mejoradas.- Commission for the Increase and Distribution of Improved Seeds.

Comisiones Nacionales de Irrigaciones y Caminos.- National Commissions for Irrigation and Roads.

Comité Regulador de los Mercados de Subsistencia.- Committee for the Regulation of Subsistence Markets.

Compañía deslindadora.- Companies formed during the last part of the XIX century which obtained concessions for defining the limits of agricultural lands.

Compañía Nacional de Subsistencias Populares (CONASUPO).- National Company for Popular Subsistence.

Comuna.- Usually a rural community organized on a communal basis.

Comunero.- Member of an Indian community, which constitutes a specific modality of land possession, legally recognized, on which a socio-economic structure habitually exists. This structure has traditional production characteristics.

Confederación Nacional Agraria.- National Agrarian Confederation.

Confederación Nacional Campesina.- National Peasant Confederation.

Confederación Nacional de la Pequeña Propiedad.- National Confederation of Small Holders.

Congreso Permanente Agrario.- Permanent Agrarian Congress.

Consejo Agrarista Mexicano.- Mexican Agrarian Council.

Consejo Nacional Cardenista.- National Council based on Cárdenas' doctrine.

Consejo Supremo de Pueblos Indígenas.- Supreme Council of Indian Communities.

Consejo de Vigilancia.- The authority of an 'ejido', formally elected by its members according to terms stipulated by law. It may represent the same interests and forces as the 'Comisariado ejidal' (see supra), or the opposite ones. In the latter case the interaction between both authorities reflects the dialectics of the contradictions within the 'ejido', which also can be seen in the very composition of the two groups.

Convención Nacional Agraria.- National Agrarian Convention.

Cooperativa.- Cooperative.

Coordinadora Nacional Plan de Ayala.- National Coordinator for the Ayala Plan.

Coyote.- A specific type of 'cacique' or other agent who operates within the sphere of commercial intermediation.

Crédito rural.- Rural credit.

Criollo.- A person of native birth but of European descent.

Cristero.- Defender of Christ. Participant in a messianic peasant movement in last part of the 1920s. The debate over the socio-political nature of the movement still persists. It was stronger in the central parts of Mexico. Many of its consequences can still be seen. Lorenzo Meyer, in his book "LA CRISTIADA" (Siglo XXI Editores, México 1979), gives an ample description of the movement and also presents an hypothesis of its origin and content, but this has not been generally accepted.

Cuartillo.- A quarter of an 'arroba' (about 6 pounds); a grain measure.

Delegación Agraria.- Official representative in each federal state of the Secretaría de la Reforma Agraria. Its basic functions are legally regulated.

Departamento de Reglamentos de Irrigación.- State office responsible for irrigation regulation.

Dirección de Asuntos Agrarios.- (State) Office of Agrarian Affairs.

Dirección General de Economía Agrícola.- Department of Agricultural Economics.

División del Norte.- Pancho Villas' army.

Ejidatario.- Member of an 'ejido'.

Ejido.- A specific form of land tenure, stipulated by law, in which the individual right to the exploitation of a specific plot of land is recognized. The right is not equivalent to private property, since it is restricted to direct exploitation of the plot of land. Legally, the 'ejidatario' cannot sell, rent or mortgage his plot of land. Inheritance is regulated by certain legal stipulations which may prevail over the explicit will of the 'ejidatario'. The organization of production in the 'ejido' may take different forms within the limits and restrictions laid down by the law, on the basis of 'ejidatarios' decisions. It must satisfy different formal requirements in order to acquire legal representation.

Empresario.- Total or partial owner of a capitalist enterprise which can be formed as an individual family unit or as a mercantile group.

Encomienda.- Certain goods (land and people) assigned or granted by the Spanish Kings. 'Encomenderos'.- people in charge of...

Finca.- Rural property. Estate.

Fondo de Garantía y Fomento de la Agricultura.- Organization which gives credit for agricultural promotion.

Gavilla.- Gang of bandits; sheaf of grain.

Golondrina.- (Swallow) This term is used to describe through an analogy with swallows, those 'campesinos' who migrate regularly in search of agricultural employment, both within and outside the country. Although this kind of behaviour is characteristic of most 'campesinos' and not just of a specific group, in this text the term has been used to refer to those who have severed their links with the land and their place of origin. Since this destroys the original analogy from which the term first arose, it is suggested that another analogy be used to point out the vagrant and rootless nature of this social group.

Hacendado.- 'Hacienda' owner.

Hacienda.- A large agricultural property. It has its origin during the colonial period and adopts its definitive characteristics in the last part of the XIX century. Although the term was still used after the 1910 Revolution to denote large landed properties, its characteristics disappeared after 1910 when its economic roots and politi-

cal context change radically.

Hacienda pulquera.- 'Hacienda' where the main product was 'pulque'.

Henequen de luna.- Practice of stealing 'henequén' from one's own plot in order to sell it to intermediaries, thus avoiding the control of the official bank which had given credit for the crop. It is known as "moon lighting" because it is done at night.

Influyente.- Person who uses his political or economic power in order to promote his own interests through forceful pressure on authorities, which is often illegal.

Instituto Mexicano del Café (INMECAFE).- Mexican Coffee Board (Government Dependency).

Instituto Nacional de Investigaciones Agrícolas.- National Institute for Agricultural Research.

Jornal.- A monetary payment (sometimes in kind) for a day's work on the land.

Jornaleros.- Temporary or permanent agricultural labourers.

Labrador.- Someone who directly works the land.

Latifundista .- Latifundist; large land-owner.

Ley de la Reforma Agraria.- Agrarian Reform Law.

Ley de Ejidos.- The 'Ejido' Law.

Ley de Riegos.- The Irrigation Law.

Liga Nacional Campesina.- National Peasant League.

Luneros.- People who have to work on Mondays (lunes = Monday).

Mecate.- Hemp rope or cord.

Medieros.- 'Campesinos' who cultivate other people's land and must give the owner half of the harvest obtained.

Mestizos.- People of mixed Caucasian and Indian ancestry.

Minifundista.- Peasant who owns or cultivates a small plot of land, generally less than five hectares. He can only use his own or his family's labour force on the exploitation.

Movimiento de Liberación Nacional.- National Liberation Movement.

Movimiento de los 400 Pueblos.- Movement of the 400 Villages.

Movimiento Nacional Plan de Ayala.- National Movement 'Plan de Ayala'.

Mozo.- Man servant; stable boy; young man.

Mulato.- A person of mixed Caucasian and Negro ancestry.

Municipio Libre.- Political and administrative area, which forms the basis of the legal structure of federal power in Mexico. The "freedom" of the 'Municipio' (its relative autonomy) is a matter that is deeply inserted within the social struggle of the Mexican people.

Nacionaleros.- 'Campesinos' who occupy and cultivate national lands.

Neolatifundistas.- Rural entrepreneurs who have control (commercial or financial) over a cultivated area, the size of which exceeds the legal maximum allowed.

Nixtamal.- Fermented maize in a mixture of water and lime — a prior stage for the production of the 'masa' (corn flour) for 'tortillas'.

Obreros agrícolas.- Salaried agricultural workers.

Oficina de Estudios Especiales.- Office of Special Studies.

Oficina de la Pequeña Propiedad.- Office dealing with small holders' issues.

Pacto Constitucional.- The Constitution of the Republic.

Pacto de Ocampo.- Agreement celebrated in 1975 between the leaders of the main national peasant organizations for the joint defense of their interests.

Panal.- Hollowed out stem of the 'maguey' cactus where 'pulque' is further fermented.

Partido Nacional Agrarista.- National Agrarian Party.

Partido Nacional Revolucionario.- National Revolutionary Party. Precursor of the official political party.

Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI).- Revolutionary Institutional Party. The official political party.

Peón.- During Porfirio Díaz' dictatorship (late XIX and early XX centuries), workers on the 'haciendas' were referred to as peons.

Peón acasillado.- A yearly-contracted workers, who brought his family to live on the 'hacienda'.

Peón de tarea.- Piece work 'peon'.

Petróleos Mexicanos (PEMEX).- Government enterprise responsible for oil exploitation in Mexican territory.

Piojal or *Pegujal.*- Small piece of land, no larger than a quarter of a hectare, given for their own use to peons who had gained the confidence of the 'hacendado'.

Plan de Veracruz.- The Veracruz Plan.

Plan Nacional de Desarrollo Industrial.- National Plan for Industrial Development.

Plan Sexenal.- Six year plan.

Prestanombres.- Name lenders.

Productora Nacional de Semillas.- National Seed Producer; State agency.

Propios.- Semi-urban lands.

Pulque.- The fermented juice of the 'agave' cactus.

Ranchero.- Owner of a ranch. By extension the term is applied to farmers and cattle raisers and to their administrative staff, as well as to the rural middle class.

Rancho.- A small or medium-sized private property hiring salaried workers and operating on a profit-making basis.

Raya.- Weekly salary.

Real.- Former Mexican currency worth ten cents.

Recampesinización.- A process in which peasants return to rural areas and to farming.

Refaccionario.- Long-term credit for productive investments.

Reglamento de la Colonia.- Legal regulations for rural settlements.

Rentista.- A person who makes his living through renting his land to others. Frequently the peasant 'rentista' actually makes most of his living through offering his labour for sale, once his land has been alienated. The rent he receives is only an additional income or represents a requirement for cultivating his own land.

República Restaurada.- Expression used by some historians to refer to the period of government which started after the defeat of Maximillian by the Mexican armies.

Secretaría de Agricultura.- Ministry of Agriculture.

Secretaría de Agricultura y Recursos Hidráulicos.- Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources.

Secretaría de Gobernación.- Ministry of Internal Affairs.

Secretaría de Programación y Presupuesto.- Ministry of Planning and the Budget.

Secretaría de Recursos Hidráulicos.- Ministry of Water Resources.

Sistema de Encargos.- The putting-out system.

Tabacos Mexicanos (TABAMEX).- Government dependency responsible for tobacco production.

Terrateniente.- Owner of large land properties providing at the same time an income and a political and economic position in society.

Tienda de Raya.- Term which reveals the nature of the 'hacienda' stores during Porfirio Díaz' period: since the peon's salary (his 'raya', see supra) was used to pay real or fictitious debts with the 'hacendado', the peon was forced to request credit for the goods he needed in order to survive.

Tlachiquero.- 'Peon' in charge of 'pulque' production.

Tlapexquera.- Type of jail to punish a 'peon acasillado' who tried to abandon his job.

Tlaxilole.- A share of 'pulque' given to 'peones' as a complement to their salaries.

Tortillas.- A type of corn pancake.

Tortillería.- Place where 'tortillas' are produced and sold.

Unión General de Obreros y Campesinos de México.- General Union of Mexican Workers and Peasants.

Vara.- Variable unit of length, about 2.8 ft.

Villistas.- Villa's followers.

Zapatistas.- Zapata's followers.